

Key Nutritional Guidelines

- 1. Eat 3 meals and 3 snacks per day** (max 2-4 hours in between). This keeps your metabolic rate up, which keeps your caloric expenditure up. This also keeps your energy levels up, including your mental energy needed for mental alertness and concentration. It may seem counter-intuitive, but you need to eat enough to maintain a healthy body composition, and to burn fat. Your body has a defence mechanism: when you go for extended periods of time without food (e.g., more than 4 hours), your body responds by going into “starvation mode” – it then slows down your metabolic rate to conserve energy, holds onto your stored body fat (since it is the only nutrient the body can store long-term), and breaks down your muscle proteins for energy (which lowers your metabolic rate even further). People who go on low-calorie diets are starving their bodies of nutrients essential for health, and although they may lose weight, this weight will be in water and muscle, and they will create an unhealthy, inefficient body composition (ratio of body fat to lean muscle).
- 2. Eat an appropriate balance of *lean* protein and *good* carbohydrates in every meal and snack.** Eating a balance of these two nutrients in every meal is critical for several reasons. First, your body needs a regular supply of quality proteins for maintaining muscle and good carbohydrates for maintaining energy levels. Second, your sugar/insulin balance is what determines (a) how energetic and alert you feel; and (b) your body’s access to stored body fat for energy. Simply put, when you eat a meal with the right balance of protein and carbs, your sugar/insulin levels are balanced, and you will feel energetic and alert, and your body will break down stored fat and use it for energy. On the other hand, if you eat a meal with too many carbohydrates and not enough protein (or vice versa), your sugar/insulin levels get out of balance, your energy levels deteriorate, and your access to stored body fat for energy is denied.
 - **Eyeball your portions:** one fist size of protein and one fist size of carbs for each meal; one half fist size of each for a snack.
- 3. Drink enough water.** Carry a water bottle with you wherever you go, and drink water continuously throughout the day, even when you’re not thirsty. You cannot rely on your body’s thirst mechanism to encourage you to keep hydrated. By the time you feel thirsty, you’re already dehydrated. Drink at least 8 glasses per day. Drink a glass ½ hour before a workout; drink constantly

throughout a workout; and drink a glass after a workout. This will keep you hydrated, as well as help your body to cleanse itself of various toxins, helping to keep you healthy and feeling good. This will also speed up your metabolism temporarily, which will help you to burn calories.

4. **Eat enough vegetables and fruit.** Fruits and vegetables are excellent sources of carbohydrates because they contain virtually no fat, and contain various vitamins and minerals. They are also particularly effective at cleansing the body of various toxins and keeping your immune system in good shape.

5. **Eat the *right* foods (make healthy choices).**

As the Canada Food Guide illustrates, it is very important to get enough nutrients from the various food groups, and to get the proper amount of the various types of nutrients in your diet (protein, carbohydrate, fat, vitamins, minerals, and water). Protein is essential for building and repairing body tissue. It is also a major component of antibodies, which help your body to fight off illness. Carbohydrates are a major source of fuel for the body, as well as dietary fibers. Fat is the chief storage form of energy in the body, and provides the body with most of its energy for lower intensity activities. Vitamins and minerals both contribute to vital bodily functions and help to maintain optimum health. Water makes up about 60% of the body and is essential for health & energy.

Specific Nutrient Recommendations

Proteins

Egg whites are a great source of protein with virtually no fat, and they can be bought separately from regular eggs. If you like the taste of egg yolks, add a maximum of one full egg to your egg whites (yolks are high in cholesterol). You could also try adding a small amount of grated cheese to your eggs for some additional protein and taste. However, eat cheese in moderation, as it is high in cholesterol. Choose light or low-fat cheese over regular cheese, as it often contains half the fat (check the nutritional value to compare). Chicken and fish are also great sources of lean protein (low in fat). Choose skinless chicken breast instead of fried chicken. Red meat is a good source of protein and iron. However, practice moderation when eating red meat, as it is higher in saturated fat. Choose extra lean ground beef and lean steak. Dried beans, peas, as well as soy and dairy products (low-fat milk, cottage cheese and yogourt) are also good sources of protein.

Carbohydrates

Fruits and vegetables are excellent sources of carbohydrates because they contain virtually no fat, and contain various vitamins and minerals. They are also particularly effective at cleansing the body of various toxins. Other healthy sources of carbohydrates include soy and dairy products (milk, yogourt), cereal (preferably high in fiber and low in sugar content), whole wheat or multigrain bagels, pasta, rice, and breads (whole wheat, multi-grain, rye or cracked-wheat are a much healthier choice than white bread). Avoid foods that are high in carbohydrates with little or no nutritional value (sweets, candy, pop, etc.)

Fats

Your body needs a certain amount of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat (healthy fat) for healthy functioning. Examples of sources of good fat include fish, almonds, and avocado. Avoid foods that are high in saturated fat and trans fat (clogs your arteries) and that provide little or no nutritional value (pastries, donuts, chocolate bars, ice cream, egg yolk, popcorn, butter, salad dressing, deep fried foods – including fries, and many types of fast food). Read the food labels to help you make better choices – they will often differentiate between unsaturated fat and saturated/trans fat.