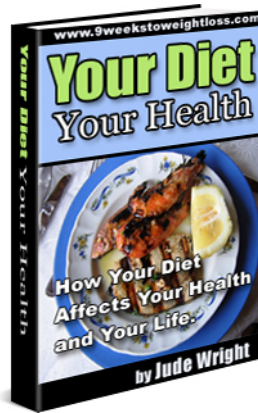


Your Diet – Your Health



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About the Author

Jude Wright is the owner of 25 websites, but her favorite sites are the ones that deal with healthy eating and weight loss. Please visit her website at <http://nutritious-cooking.com> for healthy recipes and valuable information about nutrition and weight loss.



Meet your guide to healthy eating

9 Weeks to Weight Loss leads you through the shopping, planning and preparation of tasty and quick-to-the-table meals. Home-cooked. Designed to help you lose weight gradually and painlessly. Find out more at http://9weekstoweightloss.com/9_weeks.html

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Your Diet Your Health

by Jude Wright

<http://9weekstoweightloss.com>

Could the Food you eat be causing your health problems?

Do you class yourself as having a 'cast iron' digestive system? Or do you seem to have digestive problems after eating certain foods?

Much research has been carried out on foods and there is a belief in certain quarters that certain foods, eaten together, could be the cause of many potential dietary problems.

Of course, the reasons for dietary problems can be complex, but since we are organic beings, should we not be aware that eating foods, in any order, might just be the cause, or at least, part cause, of any health or dietary problems?



When you eat your food, your body has to digest it, but have you ever stopped to think whether different food combinations may be harder to digest than others?

Eating a large meal can make some people sleepy and lethargic (something a lot of us feel like at Christmas, after the Christmas day meal!). More interestingly, eating a smaller meal, for example, a sandwich can create a similar effect, especially if it contained a protein filling. (A lazy British Earl with the surname of Sandwich invented this ubiquitous snack. He was not a dietician!)

This tiredness or lethargy after eating a meal is your body 'shutting down' while it concentrates on digesting the food (forget the Christmas alcohol for the moment).

But what happens when we are reasonably healthy and we eat, say a cheese sandwich or two?

For some, there may be nothing noticeable. But there may be some people out there that wonder why they get indigestion, or feel tired, after a reasonably small lunch, and cannot figure out why.

More surprisingly, it has been shown that some people's allergies show improvement when food is eaten in a certain (correct?) order.

Why are so many babies intolerant to milk? Milk is extremely hard to digest! You may think that your digestive system is not affected by milk, but are you 100% certain of this?

Some children suffer from Eczema in their early childhood, and then find that they 'grow out' of it. Later in life they then suffer from something else, like asthma. Could this just be a result of food intolerance over a long period of time?

Many people suffer from various health problems due to their body being unable to function as well as it should. Could part of this be due to unseen digestive problems? Could your body be less efficient if it has difficulty in digesting the food that it is given? Could your health start to improve if you changed your eating habits?

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Eating a mixture of foods, that may not be ‘perfect partners’, might not show an immediate adverse effect.

Medical problems aside, do you know whether your everyday diet is helping your body, or hindering it? Muesli, Brown bread, Healthy salads are all supposed to be healthy foods, but they can still make you tired! Why is this?

Although your diet may not be one of the ‘High protein or ‘High fiber’ varieties, and you might believe you have a healthy balanced diet, could you still be eating your choice of foods in such a way that it is making digestion difficult for you?

We are what we eat. It seems that we may have to watch how we eat it.

The Nutrients We Need

Water is Nature’s Gift



It has been estimated that our bodies consist of over 600 trillion cells, each one containing seventy percent water. Now, without getting into a lot of medical mumbo jumbo, the basic fact is that nature never does anything without a reason, so that water is there for a purpose, and that purpose is to keep us healthy. It is now an undisputed fact that the quantity and quality of our water intake is one of the major contributors to how we feel and to the functioning of the control center, our brain.

Dead Cells and Toxins.

Dead cells and toxins must be flushed from the body or they will accumulate and cause disease. Place a rotten fish in a refrigerator and it will contaminate all the other food. This is exactly what happens when your body fails to cleanse itself of debris and toxins, it becomes contaminated and disease sets in. Your body relies on you to provide it with water to flush this debris out. Not alcohol, not soft drinks, not tea or coffee, not milk but water. Put dirty fuel in your car and it will misfire, cough and splutter. Drink anything except pristine water and chances are you will do much the same. There never has been or ever will be a better substance than pure water for internal cleansing.

The Immune System

The power of the immune system is located in the blood where protection is found from foreign pathogens (an agent that causes disease, especially a living micro-organism such as bacterium or fungi). Antibodies within the blood search out and destroy these pathogens attached to organisms within the body. When blood, which is ninety percent water, becomes contaminated with toxins the antibodies become sluggish and unable to function properly. By providing our bodies with the best possible water we enhance its ability to heal and repair. Modern medicine can indeed cure us of many ailments, however quite often it can only be a “quick fix.” If the antibodies

cannot do their job properly it is only a matter of time until another disease strikes.

How Much Water Do We Need?

Your lungs expel between two and four cups per day, another two to four cups are expelled through perspiration (not including exercise induced perspiration) and on average another six cups when you go to the toilet. You need a minimum of two liters per day. To some this may seem to be an impossible task, however, taken in small quantities throughout the day, it is not hard at all.

Carbohydrates

You've heard the popular advice on weight loss diets. Cut the fat! Cut the carbs! Cut the calories! Eat a balanced diet! But how can you cut through all of the confusion, and eat a diet that's balanced and healthy?

Here's the advice from nutritional science:

Cut the JUNK fats: Most people do not need an ultra low fat diet. But most of us could improve our diet by cutting out the junk fats. Basically, these are the processed fats: hydrogenated fats, polyunsaturated oils that have been heated, and fats that are combined with junk carbs. Processed fats are the fats most likely to put on flab and clog your arteries.

Cut the JUNK carbs. Most people do not need an ultra low carb diet. But unfortunately, so many people who go on a low fat diet continue to eat highly processed foods - they switch from processed high-fat to processed low-fat. And when food manufacturers create low fat foods, they tend to replace the fat with junk carbs, which tend to pile on the pounds. Basically, junk carbs are low-fiber carbs, like sugar, fructose (and all the other *oses), flour, cornstarch, fruit juice. Yes, fruit juice is a junk carb too! - After all, how much fiber is there in fruit juice? - Virtually none - it's yet another junk carb. You should eat the whole fruit instead, with its fiber intact.

Cut the JUNK calories. Most people do not need an ultra low calorie diet. But just think what your diet would be like if you dropped the processed fats and the low-fiber carbs. You'd be eating mainly natural proteins, with lots of vegetables plus whole fruits - and the odds are that you would be eating far fewer calories as well. That's the kind of calorie cutting most of us should be doing.

Eat a balanced NATURAL-FOODS diet. By natural foods, we mean the foods that would have been eaten by your hunter-gatherer ancestors: - lots of whole vegetable foods for vitamins and fiber; moderate to small portions of meats, fish, seafood, and other animal and protein foods, grilled, stewed or baked; and small portions of fresh whole fruit in season. This is the diet on which the human race evolved, and the diet which, for the vast majority of people, makes for optimum health

So the next time you're about to order a meal with fries and sugary soda, think about how it could be improved. Replace the fries with a salad, and the soda with mineral water, and you've

already made significant progress towards a healthier, balanced meal.

And at home, look for recipes that use whole, fresh foods, with a minimum of processing. Make sure your meals include natural unprocessed foods, with lots of healthy vegetables, both cooked, and raw in salads. Avoid processed fats and processed low-fiber foods.

A sample menu:

- grilled fish with steamed green beans, and peppers
- large mixed salad, dressed with small amounts of olive oil and vinegar or lemon juice
- fresh fruit platter

Yes - A healthy, balanced diet can be that simple!

Proteins

The body requires six basic nutrients to function efficiently. Proteins, carbohydrates, lipids (fats), minerals, vitamins and water. Take away any one of these components and the body will eventually begin to deteriorate.

High protein diets are a big fad right now. They promise quick weight loss results. This is good - right?

Wrong. High protein diets dehydrate the body. You may have heard that when you go on a high protein diet, you will lose 8 to 10 pounds in the first week. Actually, the body is not capable of burning more than two pounds of body fat within a seven day period.

So what is being lost? Muscle, waste and water. A four to five percent body water loss can make you feel exhausted and unable function up to par. Another problem comes up when you go off the diet and begin to eat carbohydrates again. Water rushes back into the body and you regain all the weight you lost. You have also lost muscle mass, so your overall body fat percentage has now increased.

High protein diets are hard on the kidneys, when the kidneys become overloaded with protein. They are then unable to eliminate the nitrogen wastes which leads to kidney disease or failure.

High protein diets are low in dietary fiber and high in fat, neither of which are healthy for your body. How much protein does your body actually need? About 15 to 20 percent of your total daily caloric intake.

There is no easy way to diet. Be honest with yourself. If you are overweight, how many years did it take you to get that way? Be realistic. How much time to you think it will take to get it off.

People are looking for a "quick fix." Unfortunately, there isn't one. Only dedication and perseverance works. Put in a little hard work - or spend countless dollars on the next fad.

It's your choice.

Fats (Lipids)

The body uses fats in many different ways, so you don't want to avoid them entirely. They supply immediate energy and also can be stored for further use. Fats transport nutrients and play an important role in normal growth and development. Fats occur naturally in many plants and animals. Fats should make up no more than 30% of your daily caloric intake.

Saturated and Unsaturated Fats

The simple explanation about the differences between saturated and unsaturated fats are: Saturated fats are solid at room temperature, like butter and fatty meats. Unsaturated fats are liquid, such as vegetable oil. All fats have the same amount of calories.

Saturated fats raise the level of LDL in your blood. Too much LDL is deposited on the inner walls of arteries and leads to high blood pressure and other health problems.

Unsaturated fats do not increase the level of LDL in your blood – they lower it. You do not need a large amount of unsaturated fat to reap the benefits. In fact, they still have the same amount of fat calories.

Trans Fats

Trans fats are made from vegetable oil but have been hydrogenated – made to appear in solid form, not liquid. Studies being conducted show that trans fat, such as in margarine, can raise the risk for heart attack. They raise LDL levels and also lower the levels of HDL, the “good” cholesterol. Trans fats are found in French fries, chips and most fast foods, as well as margarine.

Vitamins

Vitamins and minerals are called micronutrients because we only need small amounts of them. If you are eating a balanced diet, you are probably getting all the vitamins and minerals you need. But if your diet consists of junk foods, you probably are not.

Vitamins help break foods down to convert them to energy. The body also uses vitamins to help produce blood cells, hormones, genes and parts of the nervous system.

Minerals are necessary for maintaining bones and soft tissues. They are also necessary for preserving the nervous system and the clotting of blood.



Essential Nutrients That Are Usually Missing From Your Diet

There are several essential nutrients missing from the diets most people eat. Replacing them with vitamin supplements doesn't make up for the synergistic effects of nutrients found in food.

Fiber

Fiber is the indigestible part of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Whole grains and cereal fiber can lower your heart disease risk by 30%. To increase the fiber in your diet to the

recommended 14g for every 1,000 calories eaten, have a ½ cup serving of Fiber One cereal and add more beans to your diet with lentil soup. Use whole grain bread and add some fruit and vegetables to your meals.

Magnesium and Potassium

Magnesium and potassium are linked to blood pressure control, protection from osteoporosis, heart disease, diabetes and stroke. To add magnesium, have a half-cup of bran and cooked spinach daily. For potassium, eat sweet potatoes, white potatoes, white beans and bananas.

Calcium

Calcium provides the raw material for building your teeth and bones. It prevents bone-thinning osteoporosis, contributes to healthy blood pressure, and can reduce the risk of colon cancer. To have the right amount in your diet, drink three glasses of low-fat or fat-free milk every day, or have eight ounces of fat-free yoghurt and 2-3 ounces of low-fat cheese each day.

Vitamin A

Vitamin A cares for and maintains our eyes, the linings of the respiratory, intestinal and urinary tracts, and the quality of our skin. To add more vitamin A to your diet, add darkly-pigmented foods to your daily diet. These include carrots, spinach, kale, winter squash, and a medium baked sweet potato. They do not include lettuce and French fries.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is necessary for our body to create collagen, a glue that holds our skin, bones, blood vessels and skin together. It also helps to make brain chemicals, neutralize damaging free radicals, and metabolize cholesterol. Vitamin C may also help the heart and reduce arthritis and diabetes. To add vitamin C to your diet, simply add a glass of orange juice or an orange every day. Other helpful foods with vitamin C are kiwifruit, cantaloupe, Brussels sprouts, strawberries, red or green bell peppers, and broccoli.

Vitamin E

Sufficient vitamin E also neutralizes free radicals to protect cells from damage, plays a role in the immune system, can help prevent the common cold, and can lower the risk of Parkinson's disease. Foods healthy in vitamin E include almonds, sunflower kernels, and sunflower oil in salad dressings, which helps you gain the nutrients from the vegetables and carry the vitamin E into the bloodstream.

Good Nutrition Made Easy



Good nutrition is critical to a healthy lifestyle, yet there is so much information out there, most people do not have a clear understanding as to what they should and should not be eating. This article will simplify things.

First off, no more will you eat three big meals during the course of the day. To optimize your metabolism and your digestive system, break the day down with five to six small and nutritious meals. We will cover what these meals should be in a second.

When you clog your system with three big meals, your metabolism slows down and your digestive system cannot handle all the food. As a result, you end up with partially-digested food and, for most people, a tired and fatigued feeling.

You want to make sure you eat within one hour of waking up. In other words, do not skip breakfast! If you take away just one thing from this article, let it be that you should eat a big and nutritious meal within one hour of waking up. Furthermore, do not eat within two hours of going to bed. The last thing you want is food sitting in your stomach when your metabolism is at its slowest.

Most people know which foods they should stay away from. The obvious ones include desserts, high-fat meals, candy, fast food and fried food. In fact, most people will feel a big difference simply by staying away from these kinds of foods. The not-so-obvious ones include:

1. Pasta (with the exception being wheat pasta)
2. Fat-free foods (because they are filled with sugar and chemicals)
3. Most frozen meals (because of all the preservatives).
4. Processed meats like fake cold cuts (because of all the preservatives and chemicals).
5. Soda and juices (because of the sugar).
6. Creamy meals (because of the fat).

Start getting in the habit of reading the ingredients of the food you buy. If sugar is one of the first three ingredients listed, do not buy it. And if you see hydrogenated oils listed anywhere in the list of ingredients, stay far away. These kinds of fats, called Trans fats, wreck havoc on your body.

As far as what to eat, buying anything at the grocery from the following list is a straight path to better health. These foods include:

1. Fruits like bananas, berries and apples
2. Whole grains including bread and pasta
3. Oatmeal (not the microwave, sugar mix

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4. Low-fat dairy including milk and yogurt
5. Chicken, turkey and fish
6. Vegetables like spinach, squash and tomatoes
7. Olive oil and fresh garlic
8. Eggs
9. Natural peanut butter (the regular kind contains hydrogenated oils)
10. Beans and legumes
11. Almonds and other nuts
12. Water (lots of it!)

Simply focus on staying away from the foods you should not eat and buy more of the foods listed above. You will find that the longer you make an effort to do this, the more will power you will slowly develop.

Obviously sometimes you are going to slip, but this is not about perfection. Make a conscious effort to improve your eating habits and you will notice a huge difference in how you look and feel. After all, you are what you eat.

Food Labels

Whether you're concerned about cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or simply losing weight, you want to eat a healthy diet and focus on foods that are high in vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients, and balanced in fats, carbs, proteins.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2 crackers (14 g) Servings Per Container About 21	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 60 Calories from Fat 15	
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1.5g	2%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 70mg	3%
Total Carbohydrate 10g	3%
Dietary Fiber Less than 1g	3%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	Iron 2%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2400mg 2400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g

There is only one way to incorporate healthy foods into our diet and that is to make the decision to do it! Practical information about the nutrition and safety of the foods we consume is absolutely vital in making this decision.

One way to learn more about what we eat, is to snoop around the supermarket. Check-out package labels to see what manufactures are adding (or removing) from the foods we eat. Read the information on the package and start making comparisons to determine which foods are the best for YOU. Know about nutritional labeling and the sometimes sneaky ways that manufacturers have of hiding what is in the food. Know and understand ingredient declarations, how they are used, and what a few of the “technical” terms mean. Are the unfamiliar ingredients good or bad for your health?

Since 1994 food manufacturers have been required by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to include food labels (or Nutrition Facts labels) on product packaging so that consumers have accurate nutritional information

about the food they purchase. But food labels are more than just a federal requirement – once you understand the information they provide, you can use food labels as a guide to planning healthier meals and snacks.

Food labels are required on almost all foods, except those that don't provide many nutrients such as coffee, alcohol and spices. Although some restaurants provide information about the food they serve, they aren't required to have labels. The FDA recommends that sellers provide nutritional information on produce, meat, poultry and seafood, but it's strictly voluntary.

What Is a Serving?

At the top of a food label under Nutrition Facts, you'll see the serving size and the number of servings in the package. The rest of the nutrition information in the label is based on one serving.

Calories, Calories From Fat and Percent Daily Values

This part of a food label provides the calories per serving and the calories that come from fat. If you need to know the total number of calories you eat every day or the number of calories that come from fat, this section provides that information. Remember that this part of the label doesn't tell you whether you are eating saturated or unsaturated fat.

On the right side of a food label, you'll see a column that lists percentages. These percentages refer to the percent daily values (%DV). Percent daily values tell you how much of something, whether it's fat, sugar or vitamin A, one serving will give you compared to how much you need for the entire day. It will help you gauge the percentage of a nutrient requirement met by one serving of the product. One way to use this section of the label is when you comparison shop. For example, if you're concerned with sodium, you can look at two foods and choose the food with the lower % DV. Are you trying to eat a low-fat diet? Look for foods that have a lower percent daily value of fat.

The %DV is based on how much or how little of the key nutrients you should eat whether you eat 2,000 or 2,500 calories a day. So if you eat a 2,000-calorie diet, you should eat less than 65 grams of fat in all the foods you eat for the day. If you're eating 12 grams of fat in your one serving of macaroni and cheese (remember that's one cup), you can calculate how much fat you have left for the day. You can use the bottom part of the food label in white to compare what you are eating to the % DV you're allowed for that nutrient, whether it's fat, sodium or fiber. If you need more or less than 2,000 or 2,500 calories, you'll need to adjust this accordingly.

Nutrients

Fat, Sugar, Sodium and Carbohydrate

The sections on a food label shows the name of a nutrient and the amount of that nutrient provided by one serving of food. You may need to know this information, especially if you have high blood pressure, diabetes or are eating a diet that restricts certain nutrients such as sodium or

carbohydrates.

Food labels also include information about how much sugar and protein is in the food. If you are following a low-sugar diet or you're monitoring your protein intake, it's easy to spot how much of those nutrients are contained in one serving.

Vitamins, Minerals and Other Information

The light purple part of the label lists nutrients, vitamins and minerals in the food and their percent daily values. Try to average 100% DV every day for vitamins A and C, calcium, iron and fiber. Do the opposite with fat, saturated fat, sodium and cholesterol. Try to eat less than 100% DV of these.

Common Mistakes to Avoid When Reading a Food Label

Until you become accustomed to reading food labels, it's easy to become confused. Avoid these common mistakes when reading labels:

-A label may say that the food is reduced fat or reduced sodium. That means that the amount of fat or sodium has been reduced by 25% from the original product. It doesn't mean, however, that the food is low in fat or sodium. For example, if a can of soup originally had 1,000 milligrams of sodium, the reduced sodium product would still be a high-sodium food.

-Don't confuse the % DV for fat with the percentage of calories from fat. If the % DV is 15% that doesn't mean that 15% of the calories comes from fat. Rather, it means that you're using up 15% of all the fat you need for a day with one serving (based on a meal plan of 2,000 calories per day).

-Don't make the mistake of assuming that the amount of sugar on a label means that the sugar has been added. For example, milk naturally has sugar, which is called lactose. But that doesn't mean you should stop drinking milk because milk is full of other important nutrients including calcium.

Reading Label Lingo

In addition to requiring that packaged foods contain a Nutrition Facts label, the FDA also regulates the use of phrases and terms used on the product packaging. Here's a list of common phrases you may see on your food packaging and what they actually mean.

No fat or fat free - Contains less than ½ gram of fat per serving
Lower or reduced fat: Contains at least 25 percent less per serving than the reference food. (An example might be reduced fat cream cheese, which would have at least 25 percent less fat than original cream cheese.)

Low fat - Contains less than 3 grams of fat per serving.

Lite - Contains 1/3 the calories or 1/2 the fat per serving of the original version or a similar product.

No calories or calorie free - Contains less than 5 calories per serving.

Low calories - Contains 1/3 the calories of the original version or a similar product.

Sugar free - Contains less than 1/2 gram of sugar per serving.

Reduced sugar - at least 25% less sugar per serving than the reference food.

No preservatives - Contains no preservatives (chemical or natural).

No preservatives added - Contains no added chemicals to preserve the product. Some of these products may contain natural preservatives.

Low sodium - Contains less than 140 mgs of sodium per serving.

No salt or salt free - Contains less than 5 mgs of sodium per serving.

High fiber - 5 g or more per serving (Foods making high-fiber claims must meet the definition for low fat, or the level of total fat must appear next to the high-fiber claim).

Good source of fiber - 2.5 g to 4.9 g, per serving.

More or added fiber - Contains at least 2.5 g more per serving than the reference food.

With a little practice, you will be able to put your new found knowledge about food labeling to work. Reassess your diet and decide what needs to be changed. Start by eliminating the foods that don't measure-up to your nutritional wants and needs, and replacing them with more nutritional substitutes.

And while you're at it, visit the FDA website (<http://www.fda.gov/>) and learn about the new labeling requirements, including those for "trans" fat. Like saturated fats, trans fats can raise levels of low-density lipoproteins (LDL) and increase your risk of heart disease. The "Nutrition Facts" panel on food packaging must provide this information beginning January 1, 2006, but most manufacturers will start providing it sooner.

Is Fried a Bad Word?

KFC changed its image by retiring the slogan Kentucky FRIED Chicken. Instead, they became known as serving up Kitchen Fresh Chicken. Long are the days of Wesson Oil commercials that proudly encouraged yummy fried chicken for dinner. When was the last time you saw a splatter

screen? How about a Fry Daddy? It must be a pretty big sin to eat fried foods these days. Or is it?

Look at the menu at Long John Silvers; nothing but fried foods. Look at any menu for that matter, deep fried beer battered shrimp, fried clams, french fries, fried potatoes, fried eggs. Outback restaurant has the Blooming Onion, that puppy is soaked in oil. Fried Fried Fried.

So perhaps no one is trying to say that fried foods are good for you, but nations sure are indulging in the grease laden foods, especially Americans. Perhaps this isn't a good time to bring up the Obesity statistics. But here's the kicker, "It tastes so good!" Granted, some fried foods are just too greasy, but a majority of them just taste delicious. That's why loads of indulgers treat themselves to a so many artery-closing delicacies!

First there were the french fries, now there are deep fried dill pickles and deep fried Oreos? How did THAT leap happen? Don't forget deep fried ice cream and deep fried peaches. Of course what menu isn't complete without the deep fried mushrooms, deep friend cheese sticks, and deep friend cauliflower? Perhaps if you deep fry vegetables, it's a little healthier? Is that how it works? Or if you deep fry already fattening nibbles, such as ice cream and Oreos, then it doesn't really matter because you're already cheating?

Nevertheless it continues. There's deep fried strawberries, Snickers, potato salad, zucchini, tofu, cheesecake, rice balls, bananas, corn, shrimp, and even deep fried turkey. Product flyers claim the winged bird is "so much juicier when cooked in a deep fryer!" So we got rid of the little table top Fry Daddy and went for the floor model turkey fryer. Umm, ok.

Then there's the big decision about what kind of oil to use? Olive, peanut, vegetable, canola, lard, butter, margarine or Valvoline 10-40? Certainly don't forget to check out your saturated fats against your polyunsaturated fats versus the monounsaturated fats.

Emotional Eating - the Dangers and Solutions

Food is a source of nourishment and energy. Without food we would not be able to perform our daily activities. Our muscles would wither, our nervous system would fail. We all need food.

However, food also has another role in our lives - a role of comfort and entertainment. Culturally and instinctively we prepare and serve foods to comfort those who have experienced loss, to celebrate joy or to show friendship and love.

What Is Emotional Eating?

Seeing food as more than just a source of energy and enjoying it simply for the satisfaction it gives is not wrong. In fact science shows that food can promote good feelings by chemical reactions caused in our brains. What IS a problem is when an individual cannot experience pain, anxiety, joy or even boredom without turning to food as means of dealing with those feelings, or they are obsessed with food, weight and dieting.

Emotional eaters turn to food as a source of distraction from dealing with feelings. However, eating these foods leads to feelings of guilt which can only be soothed with more eating,

restrictive dieting, excessive exercise or purging.

Emotional eaters tend to value themselves based on their weight and how closely they've stuck to their 'ideal' diet. Because of this distorted relationship with food, foods are labeled "GOOD" and "BAD". Emotional eating can lead to serious eating disorders and depression.

How Do I Know If I'm an Emotional Eater?

Do you turn to food for reasons other than hunger? Are you obsessed with thoughts of food - whether you plan to eat it or are concentrating on restricting yourself from eating it?

Do you regularly try diets and fail - leading to guilt and further over eating? Do you think about or attempt to purge excess food by throwing up or using laxatives? Do you exercise compulsively when you think you've eaten too much?

How Do I Overcome Emotional Eating?

Since emotional eating is caused by looking to food as a coping strategy for emotional distress dieting can actually create more problems. When the emotional eater fails to stick to a diet they suffer feelings of guilt that can only be soothed with more food and in turn, more guilt or punishment.

Instead of trying to focus on what they are eating, the emotional eater needs to learn new skills for coping with stressful emotions. Often this requires the help of a Personal Coach or Psychotherapist who deals with emotional eating. It is only by finding replacements for the comfort food provided that the individual can put food into its rightful place and learn healthy eating habits that last a lifetime.

Obesity

The First Steps to Curing Obesity

Obesity has become an epidemic, especially in The United States. An average of 300,000 Americans die each year and nearly \$177 billion is spent on illnesses related to obesity.

Obesity can affect your legs and back. It can raise your blood pressure and even cause diabetes.

We are becoming fat and lazy, but before we can conquer the problem, we have to start accepting responsibility for our own actions. What you are about to read may offend some people, but it needs to be said.

Many people suffer from being overweight. It may result from a stocky build, slow metabolism, or some other physical reason, but it is a fact of life for many people. They will probably struggle with it their entire lives.

But obesity is different. A very miniscule percentage of obese people have medical reasons for their condition. The rest of them just cannot stop shoveling the food in long enough to see the consequences of their actions.

How many times have you been in a restaurant or at a party and watched an obviously obese person shoveling in the food and drinking a diet soda? Do they think the diet soda will make all that fat and calories go away? It doesn't work that way.

Please understand that the following suggestions are only the beginning of a very long and bumpy road to recovery. But even the longest journey begins with a single step.

1. **PUT DOWN THAT TWINKIE!** Someone, right this minute, is probably reading this article and eating something fattening. If not, it has probably been less than an hour since they have last eaten.

Before they can recover from their problem, they have to admit that they have one. And that Twinkie is the first sign.

If this is you and you feel that you absolutely must eat something, get some fresh fruit or vegetables. They not only contain the essential nutrients that your body needs for good health, but some will actually burn more calories than they replace.

2. See your doctor. If you are more than 50 pounds overweight, only a fool would recommend any diet plan until you are medically cleared by your physician.

Your doctor can also advise you on the best programs to help you get started.

This cannot be emphasized enough. Once you have eliminated the fattening foods, see your doctor before going one step farther.

3. Consider seeing a counselor. Is there a deep seated, subconscious reason for your eating disorder or are you just a pig? The answers may surprise you.

Once you discover the reasons for your self destructive behavior, you will be better equipped to handle them.

If you cannot afford counseling, talk to a trusted friend or, if you are a religious person, perhaps someone at your church.

They may not be able to diagnose your problem, but they can be there for you when you encounter those bumps in the road to recovery.

The bottom line is this. Being fit not only will increase the likelihood of a longer life, it will make that life much more pleasant.

Maybe it's time you stopped looking for sympathy and give yourself a swift kick in the pants

Dieting

Little Known Facts About Changes In Our Diet

To say that Americans are obsessed with dieting is an understatement! Pick up any magazine, tune-in or turn-on any source of advertising and you're bombarded with the latest diet schemes and food fads. More often than not, they are endorsed by some familiar Hollywood celebrity, or promoted using some other clever technique.

It's no mystery that the weight-loss industry has built a thriving empire. In America, for example, we spend about 35 billion dollars every year on an assortment of weight loss products and plans. In addition, we spend another 79 billion dollars for medication, hospitalization, and doctors to treat obesity-related problems. Even with this, the obesity epidemic continues to spread. Sadly, we have become the heaviest generation in our Nation's history.

The National Center for Health Statistics reports that we have some very good reasons to be concerned about our weight-gain. Americans, for example are packing-on the pounds faster than ever before and weight-related medical problems are taking center stage. Diseases like heart disease, diabetes and yes...even certain forms of cancer have all been linked to obesity.

Here are a few of the surprising statistics about our weight:

- A whopping 64 percent of U.S. adults are either overweight or obese. That's up approximately 8 percent from overweight estimates obtained in a 1988 report.

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- The percent of children who are overweight is also continuing to increase. Among children and teens ages 6-19, 15 percent or almost 9 million are overweight. That's triple what the rate was in 1980!

- Nearly one-third of all adults are now classified as obese. At present, 31 percent of adults 20 years of age and over or nearly 59 million people have a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater, compared with 23 percent in 1994.

(The BMI is a number that shows body weight adjusted for height. For adults, a BMI of 18.5 - 24.9 is considered normal. A BMI of 25.0 - 29.9 is overweight and 30.0 or above, is considered obese.)

Modern life both at home and at work has come to revolve around moving from one "seated" position to another: whether it's television, computers, remote controls, or automobiles, we seem to be broadening the scope of our inactive endeavors.

At times, life seems to have gotten almost too easy! For entertainment, we can now just sit-down, dial-up our favorite TV program or DVD movie and enjoy hours of uninterrupted entertainment...

And all those simple calorie burning activities that were once a normal part of our daily routine not so long ago? Long gone! You know the ones I'm talking about...activities like climbing stairs instead of using escalators and elevators. Or, pushing a lawn mower instead of riding around on a garden tractor. And what about that daily walk to school? Now, our kids complain when the school bus happens to be a few minutes late getting to the bus stop!

Along with the convenience of our affluent lifestyle and reduction in energy expenditure, have come changes in our diet. We are now consuming more calorie rich and nutrient deficient foods than ever before.

Here are a few examples of what we were eating in the 1970's compared to our diet today (information is taken from a recent U.S. Department of Agriculture survey):

- We are currently eating more grain products, but almost all of them are refined grains (white bread, etc.). Grain consumption has jumped 45 percent since the 1970s, from 138 pounds of grains per person per year to 200 pounds! Only 2 percent of the wheat flour is consumed as whole wheat.

- Our consumption of fruits and vegetables has increased, but only because the U.S.D.A. includes French fries and potato chips as a vegetable. Potato products account for almost a third of our "produce" choices.

- We're drinking less milk, but we've more than doubled our cheese intake. Cheese now outranks meat as the number one source of saturated fat in our diets.

- We've cut back on red meat, but have more than made up for the loss by increasing our intake

of chicken (battered and fried), so that overall, we're eating 13 pounds more meat today than we did back in the 1970s.

- We're drinking three times more carbonated soft drinks than milk, compared to the 1970's, when milk consumption was twice that of pop.

- We use 25 percent less butter, but pour twice as much vegetable oil on our food and salads, so our total added fat intake has increased 32 percent.

- Sugar consumption has been another cause of our expanding waistlines. Sugar intake is simply off the charts. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, people are consuming roughly twice the amount of sugar they need each day, about 20 teaspoons on a 2000 calorie/day diet. The added sugar is found mostly in junk foods, such as pop, cake, and cookies.

- In 1978, the government found that sugars constituted only 11 percent of the average person's calories. Now, this number has ballooned to 16 percent for the average American adult and as much as 20 percent for American teenagers.

The days of the wholesome family dinners so near and dear to our hearts, where we all sat around the kitchen table to discuss events of the day, are now a part of our sentimental past. They have been replaced by our cravings for take-out and fast-food. We have gradually come to accept that it's "OK" to sacrifice healthy foods for the sake of convenience and that larger serving portions mean better value.

And, since I have been throwing-out statistics, here's one more: Americans are consuming about 300 more calories each day than we did twenty years ago. We should actually be eating less because of our decreased activity level, but instead are doing the opposite!

Decide TODAY that healthy eating and exercise habits will become a permanent part of your life!

Begin to explore your values and thoughts and other areas of your life where change may be required, and then take action. Begin slowly, but deliberately to make improvements in the areas you identify. And remember, it has taken a very long time to develop your habits, and it will take some time to undo them...so be patient!

Positive Attitude - Tips for Changing Your Eating Behavior

Create commitment. Write down all the reasons why you want to eat in a more healthy way. Choose the top five reason, write them on 3x5 cards, carry them with you and look at them frequently during the day.

Set reasonable goals. If your goal is to lose weight, be sure to plan on losing no more than one or two pounds per week. If your goal is to change habits, be sure to plan on one small change at a time.

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Visualize success. Affirmations are statements about yourself that you want to be true. They may not be true presently, but the potential is there. Based on your reasons for change, write an affirmation in PRESENT tense, POSITIVE, and PERSONAL. For example, “I enjoy eating lowfat foods” or “I am healthy, strong and full of vitality.” Remember your critical mind is going to say your affirmations are stupid and phony. Use them anyway. Fake it until you make it! Write them out 15 times a day. As you write them out, let the negative judgments emerge. After several days of writing both the affirmations and the negative judgments, your critical mind will finally become quiet. Put your affirmations on 3x5 cards and carry them with you.

Look for Support. Have a family meeting to discuss your health goals. Find out if others want to join you. Ask for help. Here are some examples of goals you can share: Decide to buy no more junk food for one month. Discuss cutting back on dairy products and using only nonfat milk products. Decide to have a weekly family lowfat cooking night where everyone cooks together. Decide to have weekly fitness activities together as a family. Also talk to friends about your health goals. Plan walks together, or ask friends to bring fruit for dessert when sharing a meal.

Monitor progress. Weigh yourself once a week (at the same time of day). Focus on behaviors - where, when and with whom you'll exercise; what foods you'll buy and how you'll cook them in a healthier manner.

Reshape negative eating behavior. For one or two weeks, keep a food diary. Write down everything you eat: the food, the amount, when, where and with whom you ate and how you feel. You will be surprised how often you eat for reasons other than hunger (loneliness, frustration, boredom, anger, happiness etc.). From these patterns, develop strategies to deal with the situations. For example if you notice you eat more when you're frustrated, keep a notebook so you can write down your feelings and come up with solutions, or call a friend or take a walk when negative feelings arise.

Plan rewards. Celebrate when you achieve a step toward your goals - a special book, a movie, a trip, etc.

Prevent relapse. A slip is a mistake, not the end of the world! Fifty percent of first slips occur when experiencing negative moods; fifty percent from positive events like parties when your guard is down and social pressure is high. To keep a slip from becoming a full-blown relapse, distract yourself. Plan to do something else when you have an inappropriate urge. Plan ahead for high risk times. Beware of “all or nothing” thinking. Changing behavior is a process that takes time and persistence. Remember, each small step in changing your behavior will slowly add up and get you to your goal.

Physical Fitness



Invest in Your Health

What if a trusted friend were to tell you about an investment where you could not possibly go wrong...what would be your reaction? And what if there was a virtual mountain of credible information that supported the investment claims...wouldn't you be inclined to take advantage of the

opportunity and not miss out on the rewards? Although the answer to these questions seems apparent, when it comes to investing in our health and quality of life we often choose to ignore what obviously works. Take for example, exercise...

Physical fitness may be the ultimate investment opportunity. Think of it this way. If you are willing to make the commitment (investment), you will feel and look healthier, have an abundance of energy, be more self-confident, more productive and discover a more joyous and fulfilling life. These are rewards that money cannot buy and the substance of high quality living. And, the investment of exercise becomes even more attractive when you consider that there is absolutely no down-side risk. You have everything to gain and nothing to lose. How much better can it get? How many times can you remember ever having a better offer? The honest answer is probably never, and yet many of us fail to act on this extraordinary opportunity. We simply choose to procrastinate or ignore the proven benefits of exercise!

Here are a few reasons that sometimes inhibit our willingness to “step out” and make a change or take a chance:

- Sometimes our vision gets clouded. We lose track of what is really important. Forget about the less important activities that tend to clutter our daily routine and focus on exactly what needs to be accomplished to reach your goal.

- Looking at the “big” picture can seem overwhelming. And the bigger the task, the more overwhelming it can seem. Break the task apart into smaller pieces. If you want to lose 50 pounds try losing 10 pounds and repeat the process five times! Need to start an exercise program? Begin with short, simple exercises and then slowly expand your routine. Don't exercise too hard when first starting-out or you will become stiff, tired, disillusioned and soon quit.

- Have you ever not wanted to start something for fear of failure? Take the first step, acknowledge the fear and the next step will come easier. Once fears are acknowledged, they usually quiet down.

- Sometimes we start to think that a task is unpleasant or boring. Just like any other activity, this can also be true for exercise. There are days when we just plain lack the enthusiasm and motivation to continue. It's part of human nature. On days like these focus on 'why' you are doing it. Think about all the people you care about and who may need and rely on you. What would happen if you became ill or disabled and was unable to work for a period of time, or worse, if you were out of the picture completely. How would things change? If something happened tomorrow, how would your family or business manage without you? What do you want your life to be like in the future? There are many tasks or chores we do, that we may not like, but are necessary to live a happy and productive life. Focus on the bigger picture.

- Indecision can be defeating, but doing “anything” is better than doing nothing. There are no wrong choices and very few choices that can't be undone or done again. Can't decide on a particular exercise program or routine? Pick a few exercises and start with something simple. If you don't like it, go on to the next exercise.

- When you lack the confidence to start something new, take a deep breath and try to figure out why. Are you hesitating because you really lack the skill or is it just imagined? If it's real, try to find out where to gain the skills you need or find someone with the right skills who can help. In the case of exercise, finding a qualified personal fitness trainer can sometimes do the trick, but be wary...some PFT's are overzealous and tend to start newcomers on programs that are too strenuous.

- Life just seems too busy to find time for some activities. Large, uninterrupted chunks of time are very hard to come by. And if we're honest, when they do come, we'd rather do something totally pleasurable! Exercise has to become part of your routine. It can't be an option. Make it a high priority just the same as your career, and other areas of interest. You will be surprised at how easy exercise becomes when approached this way!

- Have you ever subconsciously (or otherwise) invited distractions so that you have a "good" reason not to get something done? Sometimes it's the simple things like answering the phone or sitting down to watch that "one" TV program, that distract us. When you find yourself doing this, take control of the situation and make a conscious decision to do what you are avoiding.

To reap the benefits of exercise, or any other health related endeavor, you must agree to become a willing participant. This will require due diligence on your part. And remember, as you embark on your mission you are investing in something near and dear to your own heart...your life and a future of healthy living.

Fun Fitness Tips

Getting and staying in shape doesn't have to be dull and boring! Try some of these fun fitness activities to make your workout time more enjoyable.

MUSICAL EXERCISES – Put on your favorite music and do some yoga! No need for slow, elevator music. Move to your favorite beat. Or pop on the headphones or earphones and grab your MP3 or cassette player or handheld PC and bike to a nearby park. Too cold or rainy? Then head to a mall or other enclosed area where you can walk. Caution: make sure you are alert while listening to music with headphones or earphones.

FUN IN THE SUN – Check out the latest tanning solutions and try fun, scented versions with funky, multi-colored sunglasses. Grab your cassette player or MP3 player and favorite tunes. And pack some flavored water, new flavored health bar that you've been dying to try and some frozen berries in your carryall for breaks and have a "sense"-ational time.

FITNESS CLASSES – Try out a new fitness class for fun. Enjoy a full water aerobics workout with less stress on your joints. Grab some colorful water gear and swim to the beat. Or try a dance or Jazzercise routine. No need to commit long-term, just ask about popping in for a class or two to check it out and enjoy. Meet new friends and get fit all at once.

VCR / DVD – Head to the library or local rental store and grab a fun fitness video or DVD.

Crank up the sound when your favorite tunes come on and join the taped workout participants in the privacy of your own home.

GYM / FITNESS CENTER – Dig out those coupons you’ve been receiving in envelop mailers and those money saving coupon magazines. Again, no need to commit long-term. Just head on over and use the free or low-cost trial / invitational period and enjoy!

JOURNALING – Spice up your logging routine with an inexpensive new journal from a discount or dollar store nearby. Create snazzy charts with colored markers. Add bright colored stickers for each workout. Paste or tape clipped pictures of your goals throughout the covers and inside sections. For example, paste pictures of that vacation spot you want to travel to with your new, healthy YOU wearing a new swimsuit.

So add some fun in with your fitness activities. Wake up your senses with new taste, smells, sights, touches and sounds. Forget that “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy” stuff. Workouts plus play make Jack a fun, fit boy!

Setting Up a Basic Exercise Program

There are two basic things you need to know when you are setting up an exercise program . . .

1. You need twenty to forty minutes of aerobic exercise three to four times a week.
2. You need to include strength training at least twice a week, but preferably three times a week.

If you absolutely, positively are going to choose only aerobic exercise or strength exercise - choose aerobic exercise. You are exercising your heart muscle and aside from the obvious advantage to that, aerobic exercise will help you maintain your weight.

You need to keep in mind, however, that muscle burns fat, so if you can toss in about fifty push-ups before your aerobic exercise, you will reap the benefits....

Why strength exercise before aerobic exercise?

Actually, for the first twenty minutes of your aerobic exercise, you are burning about eighty per cent carbohydrates and twenty per cent fat. If your goal is to lose weight, you want to burn more fat and less carbs, right?

Well, the next twenty minutes will get you into about a fifty/fifty mode. You’re burning a lot more fat than you were and that’s a good thing.

If you go beyond forty minutes, you will be burning about eighty per cent fat. Realistically though, most people are not going to exercise for that long. Twenty to thirty minutes of aerobic exercise is about average.

If you start out doing pushups, you actually start the aerobic activity...not much, but it’s a start.

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So, when you begin your aerobic exercise, you may begin burning that fat a little quicker.

OK - Now to start! First, find an aerobic exercise you enjoy. More than one type of exercise is best as you can keep your workouts interesting and it will help keep your routine from getting stale.

Let's say running is an exercise you enjoy and you also like aerobics, like using some of the exercise tapes from Richard Simmons.

Now, plan your schedule by selecting the days and times you can do the exercise. Make it at least three days a week and do not take more than two days off in a row. The most popular routine is Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Most fitness experts highly recommend trying to exercise at the same time on those days; not a necessity but it helps get you into a routine and you're more likely to continue.

If you're not going to do strength training, as mentioned earlier, at least do some push-ups.

Be sure to start your routine with a warmup, and gradually increase the tempo. If you're following an exercise tape, it's fairly simple to know what intensity you should be doing. If you are running, try throwing in periods of faster running along the way, followed by slower running. This will really get you in shape.

Do the aerobic tape routine on some days and on the days you feel like going on a run, go run.

If you decide to strength train as well, do this two to three times a week! A good routine should include:

- Biceps Curl
- Triceps Curl
- Shoulder Press
- Bench Press
- Lunges
- Calf Raises

Work up to two to three sets of eight repetitions for each exercise. This will give you a full body workout.

Do this for a month and see if you don't feel a difference.

Special Considerations

Eat Out and Lose Weight -- 25 Easy & Healthy Tips for Dining Out

Diners have become more health-conscious the last few years, and now want healthy choices whether eating at home or at their favorite restaurants. Luckily, the restaurant industry has been quick to accommodate the demand, so you'll find you have many options to "eat healthy" these days.

Whether you're eating at home or dining out, the same rules for watching your weight apply. You need to eat more vegetables, fruit and whole grains. Choose smaller portions of lean meats, fish and poultry. Eat a variety of foods, and fresh, raw foods are better. Cut back on salt, sugar, saturated fats and alcohol. Drink plenty of water, and include exercise every day as part of your daily lifestyle choice.

So whether you're having lunch with the gang, or enjoying a romantic dinner for two, you can enjoy delicious-tasting foods that are low-in calories and good for you, with just a little forethought and planning.

Here are some easy tips to remember when ordering out that will help you to lose weight even when eating at your favorite restaurants:

1. If you know the menu from the restaurant you're going to, plan what you're going to have ahead of time. This will help save you from making a last minute decision that could result in high-calorie choices.
2. Drink at least one full-glass of water or iced tea before eating your meal. This helps your digestive process, and, because you'll feel full sooner, you will eat less.
3. Don't be afraid to ask for the "senior citizen" special or kid's-sized portions. Most restaurants will accommodate you—and often you'll pay less as well!
4. Order first. That way you're much less likely to be influenced by the choices of your companions.
5. If you're not sure how something is prepared, don't be afraid to ask. And if the dish is cooked in oil or butter, you can always ask if they have a "fat free" option.
6. If everything on the menu is high in fat or calories, ask if the chef could prepare a plate of fresh fruit and vegetables. Many restaurants offer a vegetarian selection, so if you don't see it on the menu, ask.
7. When ordering meat or fish, ask that it be grilled or broiled, and prepared without oil or butter. (When you eat it, use lemon or herbs and spices to give it flavor rather than heavy sauces).
8. Order an appetizer and a salad as your meal. Or a soup and salad. For dessert, choose fresh

fruit.

9. When choosing soup, remember that cream-based soups have many more calories than broth-based ones.

10. If you're having a full meal, split the appetizer and dessert with your companion.

11. If you decide to order pasta, tomato sauce has fewer calories than cream-based sauces, just like soup.

12. Choose breadsticks over bread, or if you eat bread, don't add butter. Stay away from muffins and croissants, and choose whole grain over white.

13. Choose steamed vegetables instead of baked potatoes or other starches. Again, use lemon and herbs and spices rather than butter to flavor them with.

14. Whenever possible, eat like the Europeans do, and have your biggest meal at lunchtime. Not only will you save money, but you'll cut down on calories at the same time!

15. Take the time to enjoy your meal. Savor the flavors and textures of your food, and enjoy the company you're with. When you eat slowly, you give your body's internal clock the time it needs to know when you've had enough. When you're full, stop eating. Ask your server to remove your plate so you're not tempted to keep eating while you wait for your companion to finish.

16. Ask for salsa on your baked potatoes, rather than sour cream and butter. Not only is salsa much lower in calories, but it adds a "spicy" flavor to potatoes.

17. Order salad dressings and sauces "on the side." This gives you more control of how much to use. Another tip for salad dressing—rather than pouring the salad dressing on your salad, dip your fork into the dressing first, and then into the salad. You'll get the same amount of flavor, without all the added calories!

18. Choose brown rice over white rice (or french fries), whole grain breads and rolls over white. Not only are they lower in calories, but they are better for you.

19. Stay away from "all you can eat" buffets and salad bars. It's too easy to lose track of the amount of food you're eating, even when it's salads. If that's your only choice, then stay away from the pasta, marinated salads, cheeses and fruit salads with whipped cream. Stick to soups, raw vegetables and fresh fruits.

20. Have your soup first. It will help to fill you up, and most soups have fewer calories.

21. If you're craving something sweet, and don't want fresh fruit, choose sorbet. If you absolutely HAVE to have the chocolate sauce, use the same trick as you did with the salad dressing—dip your fork into it first, then your dessert.

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22. Split your dessert with your companion. You'll still feel like you got to be indulgent, and you'll only have to exercise half as long to burn off the extra calories!
23. When ordering sandwiches, order them with mustard only, rather than mayonnaise. Not only does mustard have almost no calories, but you won't miss the mayo!
24. If the portion you were served is large, only eat half of it. Take the other half home. Not only will you get two meals for the price of one, but you'll cut the calories in half as well!
25. Go for a walk after eating. Stroll along the beach, walk through a park, visit a zoo. You'll burn calories and get your exercise at the same time!

Your Health

Health is the most valuable of all possessions. If you have good health you can attain anything else within reason.

It is natural to be healthy, but we have wandered so far astray that disease is the rule and good health the exception. Of course, most people are well enough to attend to their work, but nearly all are suffering from some ill, mental or physical, acute or chronic, which deprives them of feeling really well.

The population's state of the individual health is not satisfactory. There is too much illness, too much suffering and too many premature deaths. It is estimated that in our country about three millions of people are ill each day, on the average. The monetary loss is tremendous and the personal suffering is beyond estimate.

Everything that is worth while must be paid for in some way and the price of continued good health is some basic knowledge and self-control.

The most important single item for gaining and retaining physical health is the proper feeding of our bodies. When we consider the fact that the body is made up of various tissues, such as connective tissue, blood, nerves and muscles; that these in turn are made up of billions of cells, as are the various glandular organs and membranes; that these cells are constantly bathed in blood and lymph, from which they select the food they need and throw the refuse away, we must marvel that an organism so complex is so resistant, stable and strong.

Five Tips for Optimal Health

Every person can improve their health if they follow these five guidelines: Be optimistic, eat right, exercise, sleep well, and find purpose for your life. Follow these and you will become healthier, happier, and more productive.

First, put away fear and worry and find joy. There are health professionals who recommend not watching or listening to the news. Reading the daily newspaper in the morning starts your day off on a negative path. The news brings you crisis after crisis, tearing you down.

Change your thinking to one of optimism and gratitude. Thinking of things you can be thankful for is a great exercise every morning. Be thankful for life, for family, for the ability to see and to think. It doesn't matter what you put in the blank. The important thing is to develop a thankful heart.

The second guideline is to eat right. Eat more whole foods, less processed foods, and overcome your addictions to junk food. That is hard to hear and perhaps even harder to follow, but it is so vitally important to your overall health.

Besides eating the right foods you need to be careful not to overeat. Overeating causes us to age faster, increases wrinkles, and greatly increases our chances of acquiring many diseases such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes. If you need to, decrease the amount of food you eat.

At the same time increase the percentage of whole foods in your diet. Whole foods improve your health and improve your immune system. Eat 7-13 servings of fruits and vegetables each day and reduce the amount of sugar and salt in your diet. You will notice a difference in your energy level and your overall health.

Thirdly, get adequate sleep. If you do not sleep enough your body is not going to function efficiently. It will even slow down your metabolism and make it harder for you to lose extra weight.

Also, a lot of hormones are secreted in high levels during sleep which allows your body to recuperate and repair. For example, if you are an athlete or a body builder, not getting enough sleep will increase your chances of injury or failure.

Fourthly, exercise regularly. The average person should try to exercise every day, raising their heart rate a little bit and keeping it there for 20 minutes or so. If you cannot do it every day or every other day, at least do it every three days. Studies have shown that after being sedentary for 72 hours the body's metabolism starts to decrease.

Fifth, find purpose in your life. Even people who have experienced horrendous illness have been able to survive for a long, long time because they had a reason to live. They have become incredibly useful individuals within their family and social and community spheres despite their illness.

These five guidelines are very basic and within reach of most people. Followed closely they can lead to a longer, healthier and a more fulfilling life.

Why Do You Suffer From Fatigue?

Are you dragging yourself through another day, frustrated with your lack of energy and distracted by your need for rest? Do you wake up after a nights sleep and still feel it's not enough to get you through? Is fatigue affecting your work, your relationships and your enjoyment in life?

Fatigue is a common problem and the reason behind it can be simple to treat or require more intense scrutiny. Review the following common causes of fatigue which may shed light on why YOU are suffering.

LACK OF SLEEP

Most adults need eight full hours of sleep every night in order for their bodies to get the rest they need to repair and re-energize. If you are not getting the full amount of sleep required your body will start demanding it of you.

If you cannot waken without an alarm or find yourself drifting into sleep during the day you should take immediate steps to provide your body with the sleep it requires.

Other problems such as snoring or sleep apnea (brief episode of stopped breathing) can also affect the quality of sleep. Any disturbance, including feeding infants or other sleep disruptions, can cause fatigue.

LACK OF PROPER NUTRIENTS

Fast foods and skipped meals will deplete the body of needed nutrients. A lack of nutrients can cause fatigue. Taking a multi-vitamin supplement can ensure that you are getting the needed nutrients for your body to function properly. A balanced diet will further assist you in combating fatigue.

HORMONES

If continued fatigue is not corrected with enough sleep or taking proper nutrients it may be connected to a hormone imbalance.

Detecting a hormonal imbalance will be more difficult to diagnose than a lack of sleep or proper nutrients. The assistance of a knowledgeable health care professional familiar with the symptoms of hormone imbalance may be necessary in tracking down the hormone responsible.

LOWERED IMMUNITY

Fighting illness takes energy. If a person has a lowered immunity the constant battle against infection can easily lead to an increased level of fatigue.

LOW IRON/ HIGH IRON

Iron deficiency can lead to anemia which causes fatigue. Even a mild iron deficiency, which can be missed in typical bloodwork results, can still cause a person to experience fatigue.

Iron overload is a condition that is caused when a persons organs absorb and accumulate iron which can reach toxic levels - a symptom of which can be fatigue. Special tests can be made to diagnose low or high iron levels which must be followed up with proper treatment.

Your Diet Your Health

by Jude Wright

<http://9weekstoweightloss.com>

OVERWORK and UNDER-PLAY

Working too much or other emotionally draining activities can result in physical fatigue. Taking the time to participate in activities which stimulate and strengthen the body and mind are an essential step to conquering fatigue.

The End

Thank you for reading this ebook. If you liked it, please pass it on to a friend.



Meet your guide to healthy eating

9 Weeks to Weight Loss leads you through the shopping, planning and preparation of tasty and quick-to-the-table meals. Home-cooked. Designed to help you lose weight gradually and painlessly. Find out more at http://9weekstoweightloss.com/9_weeks.html