



## Heath: You are what you eat

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**Abstract:** *It is said that eat too much animal fat and animal protein, fried foods and refined, nutrient-poor white flour/white sugar products such as donuts and pizza, your body will become inflamed and clogged with unhealthy fats, and become a breeding ground for the ills that afflict many of us today, including obesity, heart disease and cancer. More physical activity is better than less, and any is better than none.*

**Key Words:** *obesity, heart disease, cancer, physical activity*

### Introduction:

Lord Buddha said "To keep the body in good health is a duty.... Otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear". But today our life style is changing rapidly. Food habits are also changing. Physical activity is reduced in current professional as well as domestic lives. Based on these changes, daily food intake should also be changed. Try to maintain your body weight by balancing what you eat with physical activity. If you are sedentary, try to become more active. If you are already very active, try to continue the same level of activity as you age. More physical activity is better than less, and any is better than none. If your weight is not in the healthy range, try to reduce health risks through better eating and exercise habits. Take steps to keep your weight within the healthy range (neither too high nor too low) and getting as much as exercise as possible is quite important. Physical activity is important for overall health for all age groups. Being physically active should be your goal.

*"Lack of activity destroys the good condition of every human being, while movement and methodical physical exercise save it and preserve it"*  
-Plato

It is important for people of all ages to maintain a healthy weight. People who are overweight increase their risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, breathing problems, and other illnesses. To maintain a healthy body weight, people must balance the amount of calories in the foods and drinks they consume with the amount of calories the body uses. Physical activity is an important way to use food energy. Extreme thinness is also unhealthy. People who eat very little or diet excessively may not get the calories and other nutrients they need for good health. Indians depend mostly on American studies and suggestions for confirming daily nutrition requirements. Deciding nutritional requirements was started in 1944 for the first time in India. Average weight of men and women in those days was 55kgs and 45kgs respectively. Presently India is in a peculiar state where most of the citizens are suffering from lack of nutritious food and the remaining are suffering from obesity due to consumption of high caloric food. Changing life styles are causing cancers, blood vessel problems, high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity. It has been proposed in latest recommendations by ICMR and NIN that



daily intake of calories should be reduced.

#### Discussion

Enjoy eating a variety of foods. Get the many nutrients your body needs by choosing among the varied foods you enjoy from these groups: grain products, vegetables, fruits, milk and milk products, protein-rich plant foods (beans, nuts), and protein-rich animal foods (lean meat, poultry, fish, and eggs). Remember to choose lean and low fat foods and beverages most often. Many foods you eat contain servings from more than one food group. Eat a variety of foods that are low in calories but high in nutrients.

Foods contain combinations of nutrients and other healthful substances. No single food can supply all nutrients in the amounts you need. For example, oranges provide vitamin C but no vitamin B<sub>12</sub>; cheese provides vitamin B<sub>12</sub> but no vitamin C. To make sure you get all of the nutrients and other substances needed for health, choose the recommended number of daily servings from each of the five major food groups: grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, meat and beans.

Grain products, vegetables, and fruits are key parts of a varied diet. They are emphasized in this guideline because they provide vitamins, minerals, complex carbohydrates (starch and dietary fiber), and other substances that are important for good health.

#### To Decrease Calorie Intake

- Eat a variety of foods that are low in calories but high in nutrients—check the Nutrition Facts Label on the foods you eat.

- Eat less fat and fewer high-fat foods.
- Eat smaller portions and limit second helpings of foods high in fat and calories.
- Eat more vegetables and fruits without fats and sugars added in preparation or at the table.
- Eat pasta, rice, breads, and cereals without fats and sugars added in preparation or at the table.
- Eat less sugar and fewer sweets like candy, cookies, cakes, and soda.

#### Fiber

Fiber is found only in plant foods like whole-grain breads and cereals, beans and peas, and other vegetables and fruits. Because there are different types of fiber in foods, choose a variety of foods daily. Fiber is found only in plant foods like whole-grain breads and cereals, beans and peas, and other vegetables and fruits. Because there are different types of fiber in foods, choose a variety of foods daily. Eating a variety of fiber-containing plant foods is important for proper bowel function, can reduce symptoms of chronic constipation, diverticular disease, and hemorrhoids, and may lower the risk for heart disease and some cancers. However, some of the health benefits associated with a high-fiber diet may come from other components present in these foods, not just from fiber itself. For this reason, fiber is best obtained from foods rather than supplements.

**Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat**—Olive oil is particularly high in monounsaturated fats; most other vegetable oils, nuts, and high-fat fish are



good sources of polyunsaturated fats. Both kinds of unsaturated fats reduce blood cholesterol when they replace saturated fats in the diet. Remember that the total fat in the diet should be consumed at a moderate level—that is no more than 30 percent of calories. Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat sources should replace saturated fats within this limit.

If you fill your body with the most nutrient-dense foods, namely whole plant foods including green vegetables, beans, onions, seeds, berries and other fruits and vegetables, you will get a maximum dose of vitamins, minerals, anti-oxidants, carotenoids, and other phyto-nutrients that keep your body healthy, and protect it from within from heart disease, high cholesterol and cancer. On the other hand, if you eat too much animal fat and animal protein, fried foods and refined, nutrient-poor white flour/white sugar products such as donuts and pizza, your body will become inflamed and clogged with unhealthy fats, and become a breeding ground for the ills that afflict many of us today, including obesity, heart disease and cancer.

#### **Where do vitamin, mineral, and fiber supplements fit in?**

- Supplements of vitamins, minerals, or fiber also may help to meet special nutritional needs. However, supplements do not supply all of the nutrients and other substances present in foods that are important to health. Supplements of some nutrients taken regularly in large

amounts are harmful. Daily vitamin and mineral supplements at or below the Recommended Dietary Allowances are considered safe, but are usually not needed by people who eat the variety of foods depicted in the Food Guide Pyramid.

- Sometimes supplements are needed to meet specific nutrient requirements. For example, older people and others with little exposure to sunlight may need a vitamin D supplement. Women of childbearing age may reduce the risk of certain birth defects by consuming folate-rich foods or folic acid supplements. Iron supplements are recommended for pregnant women. However, because foods contain many nutrients and other substances that promote health, the use of supplements cannot substitute for proper food choices.
- **To obtain the nutrients and other substances needed for good health, vary the foods you eat**
- To burn calories, devote less time to sedentary activities like sitting. Spend more time in activities like walking to the store or around the block. Use stairs rather than elevators. Less sedentary activity and more vigorous activity may help you reduce body fat and disease risk. Try to do 30 minutes or more of moderate physical activity on most -- preferably all -- days of the week.
- A famous quote says *“Seven days without exercise makes one weak”*



**To conclude:**

Know how many calories are required for you to maintain an ideal body weight.

Plan ahead, to make better food choices.

Track food and calorie intake

Limit calorie intake from solid fats and added sugars.

Reduce intake of sugar-sweetened beverage

Reduce portions, especially of high-calorie foods.

Cook and eat more meals at home, instead of eating out.

Eat more fresh seasonal produce

Vitamin intake needs to be increased

Eat mindful

Water is crucial. Drink plenty during the day at work and home. More than 1 ½

liters is suggested, summers or winters. Get as much as exercise as possible. Physical activity is important for overall health for all age groups.

*Mahatma Gandhi said “It is the health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver”*

**References**

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