

English

Keeping FIT

about

healthy eating

YOU'LL LEARN ABOUT

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Things

to remember:

- A teenager who eats fast food regularly is more likely to put on weight than a teenager who eats fast food from time to time;
- Many teenagers wrongly consider healthy food to be expensive and tasteless;
- Eating well doesn't mean you must be a health food freak: a good diet allows to have your favourite junk foods sometimes.

DIETARY PATTERNS



While school-food service personnel attempt to provide healthful meals and food choices, children do not always eat the food they receive. The dietary patterns of children are determined by social, **psychological**, and economic factors.

School children spend more time eating at home than they do at school. Their food choices and food preferences are thus largely dependent on what their

parents and caregivers provide. When children are young, their parents and families have greater control over what they eat. As they get older, however, what their friends eat in the school **environment**, and what is available to them at school and elsewhere, will have an impact on what they eat. What children eat at school is dependent on many factors, including the cafeteria environment, peer pressure, administrative support, teacher participation, cafeteria staff, and the quality of food choices offered.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, more families are headed by single parents than ever before, and a greater number of

two-parent families have both parents in the workforce. As a result, toddlers and preschoolers often have to depend on their schools to feed them.

Even so, there is no guarantee they will eat what they are given.



Junk Food in Schools

In recent years, public health officials and school administrators have come to realize that schools are frequently working against the cause of sound nutrition in school children. Many school districts have negotiated exclusive contracts with fast

food and beverage companies to provide their products to students, with a portion of the revenues going to the schools. As a result, cafeteria and vending machine lunches commonly include pizza, burgers, chips, soda, candy, and ice cream. Children

need nutritious foods to grow and to function. Many children skip breakfast by choice either because they do not have the time to eat or in order to lose weight. In addition, many school-aged children depend on **junk foods** for their nourishment.

Junk food is poor fuel for your body

Good nutrition is essential for everyone, but it's especially important for growing teenagers. Unfortunately, many of them have an unbalanced diet. One in four school children buys unhealthy food every day or even a few times a day. If you eat such food regularly, you are more likely to put on weight than if you eat fast food only occasionally.

Don't despair! It doesn't take a lot of effort to change your eating habits. A few simple changes will make a huge difference. You'll feel better, manage your weight, improve your skin and even save money!

About 9 in 10 teenagers eat junk food every day. This might be fizzy drinks and snacks like

potato chips. However, your body can't run properly on inferior fuel. Compared to home-cooked food, junk food (which includes fast food) is almost always:

- higher in fat;
- higher in salt;
- higher in sugar;
- lower in fibre;
- lower in vitamins and minerals;
- served in larger portions, which means more kilojoules.

While a mid-heart attack might seem too far away to be real, it may surprise you to know that

you could have health problems already. A poor diet can cause weight gain, high blood pressure, constipation, fatigue and concentration problems—even when you're young.



How to improve your diet without even trying

Small changes can make a big impact. Try these tips:

-Cut back on fizzy sugary drinks. Drink water instead, try to add a slice of lemon, lime or orange.

-Eat breakfast every day so you're less likely to snack on junk food at morning tea. A cereal served with low fat milk can pro-

vide plenty of vitamins, mineral and fibre. Or you can have yoghurt or wholemeal toasts.

-Don't skip lunch or dinner.

-Help with the cooking and think up new ways to create healthy meals.

-Reduce the size of your meals.

-Don't add salt to your food.

-Don't eat high fat foods every time you visit a fast food outlet with your friends. Many of the popular fast food chains now have healthier food choices on the menu.

-Change your meeting place. Rather than meeting up with your friends at the local take-away shop, suggest a food outlet that serves healthier foods such as wholemeal rolls or sushi.

Change the way you think about food

How to get rid of the myths about healthy food

There are lots of myths around about healthy food. Don't make food choices based on false beliefs. You should:

- Compare the prices of junk foods against the price of healthier food options to see that 'healthy' doesn't have to mean 'expensive'.

- Do experiments with different foods and recipes. You'll soon

discover that a meal cooked with fresh ingredients always leaves a limp burger or soggy chips for dead.

- Try different 'fast' options like wholewheat breakfast cereal, muesli, wholemeal bread, wholemeal muffins, fruit, yoghurt and noodles. 'Fast food' doesn't have to mean 'junk food'.

- Don't think that your diet has to be 'all or nothing'. Eating well doesn't mean you must a health food freak.



Fruit and vegetables: benefits



Fruit and vegetables are an important part of your daily diet. They are naturally good and contain vitamins and minerals that can help to keep you healthy. Research shows they also help to protect against some diseases. People can benefit from eating more fruit and vegetables as part of a well-balanced, regular diet and a healthy active lifestyle.

Fruit and vegetables contain

many vitamins and minerals that are good for your health. They include vitamin A (beta-carotene), C and E, magnesium, zinc, phosphorous and folic acid. Research into folic acid shows that it may reduce blood levels of homocysteine, a substance that may be a risk factor for coronary heart disease.

Fruit and vegetables are low in fat, salt and sugar and provide a good source of dietary fibre. As part of a well-balanced, regular diet and a healthy active lifestyle, a high intake of fruit and vegetables can help:

- reduce obesity and maintain a healthy weight;
- lower your cholesterol;

- lower your blood pressure.

You can also have a lower risk of:

- type 2 diabetes;
- heart diseases;
- stroke;
- cancer—later in life;
- high blood pressure.



Two fruit and five vegetables— every day

Different fruit and vegetables contain different nutrients. The dietitians recommend that adults eat at least five kinds of vegetables and two kinds of fruit every day. Unfortunately, people of all ages don't eat enough vegetables and fruit.

A diet high in fruit and vegetables can help to protect against cancer, diabetes and heart disease

Children have a smaller stomach capacity and higher energy needs. They will not be able to eat the same serving sizes as adults; however, they should be encouraged to eat a variety of fruit and vegetables and start good practices early in life.

By eating well, the children will have the energy they need to play, concentrate better, learn, sleep better and build stronger teeth and bones. Building good habits in the early years can also provide the protection of a healthy diet throughout their lives.



Choosing fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are an important part of your daily diet. They are naturally good and contain that can help to keep you healthy. Research shows that other compounds, phytochemicals or antioxidants, can also help to protect against some diseases.

There are many varieties of fruit and vegetables available and they can be prepared, cooked

and served in a variety of ways. Eat five kinds of vegetables and two kinds of fruit every day for good health.

When buying and serving fruit and vegetables, go with variety for maximum of nutrients and appeal. Select a mix of seasonal fruit and vegetables from the different groups and choose for freshness and quality.

Eat with the seasons—this is nature's way of making sure our bodies get a healthy mix of nutrients and plant chemicals. Try something new—try out a new recipe each week and buy a new fruit or vegetable as part of your weekly shopping. Let colours guide you—different colours generally indicate different combinations of nutrients. Put a rainbow on your plate!

Things to remember:

- Eating a wide food variety of healthy foods (especially fruit and vegetables) helps to protect against diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease.
- Food variety means eating foods with different nutrients and from each of the five different food groups in the recommended amounts.



Healthy eating tips



Healthy diets contain a variety of foods. In general, we should all eat:

- a wide variety of nutritious foods;
- plenty of bread and cereal, legumes, vegetables and fruit;
- low salt foods, and use salt sparingly;
- small amount of foods which contain added sugar.

Physical activity. A good balance between exercise and food intake is important, as this helps to maintain a healthy body weight. About 30 minutes of physical activity, such as walking, is recommended every day.

Keep fat to a minimum. Adult diet should be low in fat, especially in

saturated fat. Saturated fat which is predominant fat in animal products is more easily deposited as fat tissue than unsaturated fats. Saturated fat can also be converted into cholesterol and cause blood cholesterol levels to rise.

Small amount of polyunsaturated and mono-unsaturated fats may have some health benefits when they are part of a healthy diet. Polyunsaturated fats are generally thought to lower blood cholesterol levels. Polyunsaturated omega-3 fatty acids, which are found in fish, are thought to have an anti-clotting effect on blood and may lower blood pressure.

Eat less high kilojoule foods.

The total amount of energy-dense foods you eat may be as important as the total amount of fat in your diet. To reduce the energy density of your diet, you need to increase the amount of plant foods you eat. This will provide essential nutrients, help to make you feel 'full' and also reduce the amount of fat in your diet.

Eat foods rich in calcium and iron.

Don't skip breakfast. Children who skip breakfast generally have below average nutrition. Their diets contain less calcium, iron, dietary fibre and vitamins such as riboflavin and niacin.

Skipping breakfast becomes more common as children get older. Some schools have introduced breakfast programs because they were concerned about children who skip breakfast. Children did better in school once the program was introduced.

