

4150 Woodlands Pkwy, Suite B
Palm Harbor, FL 34685
(727) 772-1452



2137 Little Rd
Trinity, FL 34655
(727) 372-6760

HEALTHY DIET

Health Problems Related to Diet

At least 6 health problems have been proven to relate to diet. The first 4 problems occur in children as well as in adults. The last two occur primarily in adults.

1. **Iron deficiency anemia** This type of anemia usually occurs between 6 months and 2 years of age. The main symptoms are fatigue and delayed motor development. Iron deficiency anemia can also cause behavioral symptoms such as restlessness, irritability, and poor attention span.
2. **Overweight** Obesity is one of the most common nutritional problems in this country. Obesity is also one of the most important contributing factors in heart disease, hypertension, and some cancers.
3. **Tooth decay** Tooth decay is more likely if a child has a lot of sugar in his diet. (Poor toothbrushing habits also contribute to tooth decay.)
4. **Intestinal symptoms** Too little fiber in the diet can cause intestinal problems such as constipation, abdominal discomfort, appendicitis, gallstones, and some intestinal cancers.
5. **Coronary artery disease** A lot of animal fat (especially cholesterol) in the diet contributes to coronary artery disease. This disease hardly exists in poor countries where the population subsists on low-fat, high-carbohydrate diets. It is also less common among vegetarians.
6. **High blood pressure** High blood pressure has been associated with an increased amount of salt or a decreased amount of calcium in the diet of some susceptible persons. Most people, however, get rid of extra salt through their kidneys and don't develop high blood pressure.

Recommendations for a Healthy Diet

Learn the 5 basic food groups:

- milk products (milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream) 2 to 3 servings per day
- meat/eggs (red meats, poultry, fish, and eggs) 2 to 3 servings per day
- grains (breads, cereals, rice, pasta) 6 to 11 servings per day
- fruits (juice or solid fruit): 2 to 4 servings per day
- vegetables (juice or vegetables): 3 to 5 servings per day

20% of a healthy diet should consist of milk, meat and eggs, and 80% should be vegetables, fruits, and grains. (Fiber is found in grains, fruits, and vegetables.) Another similar recommendation is that children should get 55% of their calories from carbohydrates, 30% from fats, and 15% from proteins.

Eat 3 meals a day. Breakfast is essential for children. Skipping breakfast can compromise performance at school. For dieters, skipping breakfast usually doesn't lead to weight loss. All meals should contain fruits or vegetables, as well as grains. Meat or milk should be included in 2 of the meals. Eating snacks is largely a habit. Snacks are unnecessary for good nutrition but harmless unless your child is overweight. If your child likes snacks (and most children do), encourage fruits, vegetables, and grains, but don't give them close to mealtime.

Decrease the amount of fat (meat and milk products) in the diet. Americans eat excessive amounts of meat and dairy products. Although cholesterol is important for rapid growth, children over age 2 should consume it in moderation (not eliminate it). To decrease the amount of fat in the diet, follow these guidelines:

- Remember that 1 serving of meat per day is adequate for normal growth and development. (Don't serve meat more than twice a day.)
- Serve more fish and poultry and fewer red meats, since the latter have the highest cholesterol levels. Lean red meats are lean ground beef, pork loin, veal, and lamb.
- Trim fat off meats and the skin from poultry.
- Don't serve bacon, sausages, spareribs, pastrami, and other meats that have a high fat content. Cut back on hot dogs, lunch meats, and corned beef.
- Limit the number of eggs to 3 or 4 per week. (Eggs have the highest cholesterol content of any of the commonly eaten foods. The cholesterol in 1 egg is equivalent to the cholesterol in 14 ounces of beef, 1-and-1/2 quarts of whole milk, or 1 quart of ice cream.)
- Serve 2% milk instead of whole milk for children over 2 years of age.
- Decrease the amount of milk your child drinks to 2 or 3 cups per day. (Encourage your child to drink water to satisfy thirst.) On the other hand, some teenage girls may need to be reminded to consume adequate milk products (the equivalent of 3 glasses of milk) to lay down the bone mass required to prevent osteoporosis later in life.
- Buy margarine instead of butter.
- Keep in mind that red meat may be hard to give up because of the widespread misconception that red meat helps to build muscle mass and strength.

Increase the amount of fruits, vegetables, and grains in the diet. Follow these guidelines:

- Children should consume at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day. (50% of American children eat only 1 fruit or vegetable per day.)
- Try to serve a fruit at every meal.
- Offer fruits as dessert and snacks.
- Start every day with a glass of fruit juice. (Caution: Limit fruit juices to 2 cups per day to prevent diarrhea.)
- From a practical stand point, fruits and vegetables are interchangeable. Don't force children to eat vegetables they don't like. Offer ones they do like or substitute a fruit.
- When making casseroles, increase the amount of vegetables and decrease the amount of meat.
- Serve more soups.
- Encourage more cereals for breakfast.
- Use more whole-grain bread in making sandwiches.

Include an adequate amount of iron in the diet. Throughout our lives we need adequate iron in our diets to prevent anemia. Everyone should know which foods are good sources of iron. Red meats, fish, and poultry are best. One serving per day of these foods will provide adequate iron. Although liver is a good source of iron, it contains 16 times more cholesterol than beef and should be avoided. For young children who refuse meats in general, use low-fat luncheon meats as a meat source. Adequate iron is also found in iron-enriched cereals, beans of all types, peanut butter, raisins, prune juice, sweet potatoes, spinach, and egg yolks. The iron in these foods is better absorbed if the meal also contains fruit juice or meat.

Avoid excessive salt. Salt is not usually harmful for people without high blood pressure. However, to discourage a taste for excessive salt in infants do not add it to their foods. Remove the salt shaker from the dinner table. Use other herbs and spices instead of salt. Purchase salty foods such as potato chips and pretzels sparingly.

Avoid excessive pure sugars. Sweets are not bad, but they should be eaten in moderation. Most humans are born with a "sweet tooth." They seek out and enjoy candy, soft drinks, and desserts. The main side effect of eating candy is tooth decay if the teeth are not brushed afterward. Eating food with a lot of sugar ("a sugar binge") can cause jitters, sweating, dizziness, sleepiness, and intense hunger 2 to 3 hours later. This temporary reaction is not harmful and can be relieved by eating some food. A love of sweets is not related to obesity (if the total calories per day are normal) or hyperactivity. A high amount of sugar in the diet has not been correlated with coronary artery disease or cancer.

Know what to eat before exercise. Eating meat does not improve athletic performance. The best foods to eat before prolonged exercise are complex carbohydrates. These include bread, pasta (noodles), potatoes, and rice. These should be eaten 3 to 4 hours before the athletic event so they have passed out of the stomach. Drinking water continues to be important up to the time of the activity and every 20 to 30 minutes during the activity.