

Healthy Eating + Healthy Activity = Healthy Weight

With so many trendy diets out there, the options on what to eat can be overwhelming. Craze diets can even lead you to try something that may be potentially harmful to you. Eating a well-balanced diet and maintaining a healthy weight can help you lead a longer, healthier and higher quality life.

Healthy Eating has many benefits which include:

- Achieve and maintain ideal weight
- Look and feel better
- Enjoy more energy
- Improve joint function
- Improve brain function
- Improve quality of life

While there are many specific requirements for healthy eating which is dependent on your particular disease states, overall to eat healthy, it is important to fill your plate with a variety of nutrient rich foods consisting of lean proteins, colorful produce, high quality fats and complex carbohydrates and to avoid processed foods, refined grains, or added sugars.

In order to determine healthy eating, we have to discuss some of the common nutrition myths and truths:

- Eating late at night will make me gain weight
False – Eating too many calories will make you gain weight no matter what the timing
True - Eating small portions throughout the day will help to maintain your metabolism.
- I will lose weight by eliminating carbohydrates
False – You may lose weight initially but will regain that weight and maybe more when you introduce carbs back into your diet.
True - The brain uses carbohydrates as a fuel source and their lack can impair your brain functions. Also carbohydrates are the body's main source of fuel for energy.
- A quick diet will help me lose weight and keep it off
False – "Diets" are usually a short term program that does not focus on nutrition or behavior changes.
True - Learning how to live a healthier lifestyle and make healthy food choices will lead to long term success.

- If I skip meals, I can lose weight
False – Skipping meals can lead to the “Starve and Stuff” Syndrome causing you to binge eat during the day or overeat during the next meal. Also the body begins breaking down muscles that it needs for energy.
True – Eating small portions throughout the day will help to keep you feeling full, fueled up and maintain your metabolism.
- Eating health costs too much money
False.
True – Eating healthy is affordable as there are a variety of eating habits that can be adjusted to eat within a budget.

For healthy eating and diet control it is important to understand activity and that a calorie is a unit of measure of food energy. Calories in food provide energy in the form of heat so that our bodies can function. Our bodies needs calories for energy but eating too many will lead to weight gain.

There are 3,500 calories in a pound of body fat so in order to maintain weight we must count calorie intake by the food we eat and calorie output by the amount of activity that we participate in. So to lose a pound of weight, we must:

- Eat 3,500 less calories
- Exercise and burn 3,500 calories more
- Or the best approach is a combination of both eating and activity

All movement and activity burns calories, including breathing, heart beat and even sleeping. However we must be physically active to burn enough calories to maintain a healthy weight. Some examples of normal daily activities and their calories burned are:

Walk 1 mile = 100 calories

15 minutes dishwashing = 20 calories

30 minutes vacuuming = 100 calories

10 minutes on stair-stepper or going up stairs = 30 calories

1 minute low impact chair exercises = 4 - 7 calories

Chair Exercises are a great option to be active if you have injuries, balance problems, joint pain or other issues that makes standing exercise challenging for you.

So, remember that the key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is maintaining a healthy lifestyle that includes healthy eating, regular physical activity and balancing the number of calories you eat with the number of calories that your body uses. Also remember, you should check with your Personal Care Physician at your next visit regarding your individual health and diet recommendations. Or better yet, schedule a visit now to discuss this Healthy Eating and Healthy Weight and get on the road to a healthier, happier life style beginning now!