

Healthy Eating Doesn't Have To Be Hard!

Healthy eating is not about strict dietary limitations or depriving yourself of the foods you love. Rather, it's about feeling great, having more energy, improving your health, and stabilizing your mood. If you feel overwhelmed by all the conflicting nutrition and diet advice out there, you're not alone. By using these simple tips, you can cut through the confusion and learn how to create a tasty, varied, and healthy diet that is as good for your mind as it is for your body.

We all know that eating right can help you maintain a healthy weight and avoid certain health problems, but your diet can also have a profound effect on your mood and sense of wellbeing. Studies have linked eating a typical Western diet, filled with processed meats, packaged meals, takeout food and sugary snacks, with higher rates of depression, stress, bipolar disorder, and anxiety. Eating more fresh fruits and vegetables, cooking meals at home, and reducing your intake of sugar and refined carbohydrates, may help to improve mood and lower your risk for mental health problems. While some specific foods or nutrients have been shown to have a beneficial effect on mood, it's your overall dietary pattern that is most important. You don't have to be perfect and you don't have to completely eliminate foods you enjoy to have a healthy diet and make a difference in the way you think and feel.

Set yourself up for success. Changing everything at once usually leads to cheating or giving up on your new eating plan. To set yourself up for success, think about planning a healthy diet as a number of small, manageable steps, like adding salad to your diet once a day. As your small changes become habit, you can continue to add more healthy choices.

Prepare more of your own meals. Cooking more meals at home can help you take charge of what you're eating and better monitor exactly what goes into food.

Make the right changes. When cutting back on unhealthy foods in your diet, it's important to replace them with healthy alternatives. Replacing dangerous trans-fats with healthy fats (such as switching fried chicken for grilled fish) will make a positive difference to your health.

Simplify. Instead of being overly concerned with counting calories, think of your diet in terms of color, variety, and freshness. Focus on avoiding packaged and processed foods and opting for more fresh ingredients.

Read the labels. It's important to be aware of what's in your food as manufacturers often hide large amounts of sugar or unhealthy fats in packaged food, even food claiming to be healthy.

Focus on how you feel after eating. This will help foster healthy new habits and tastes. The more healthy food you eat, the better you'll feel after a meal. The more junk food you eat, the more likely you are to feel uncomfortable, nauseous, or drained of energy.

Drink plenty of water. Water helps flush our systems of waste products and toxins, yet many people go through life dehydrated, causing tiredness, low energy, and headaches. It's common to mistake thirst for hunger, so staying well hydrated will also help you make healthier food choices.