



Muhlenberg College Nutrition

Nutrition Insights

From super foods to the newest fad diet, everyone seems to have an opinion on nutrition. With almost 40% of American adults battling obesity, it is important to know what science says about the foods we consume.

The following are some nutritional strategies that promote health and lower the risk of chronic disease.

Choose Healthy Fats

Fat gets a bad rap, but not all fat is bad! According to the Cleveland Clinic, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats actually reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease, including lowering triglycerides and blood pressure. Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are found in a variety of foods such as olive and corn oils, nuts, fish and avocados.

Saturated and trans fats, however, have the opposite effect. These fats are found in high-fat dairy products, butter, fried foods, bacon, beef, pork, lamb, veal, and desserts made with lard, butter or tropical oil. Your total daily fat intake should range from 20% to 35% of your total daily calorie intake.

Increase Fruits and Vegetables

Did you know that only 3% of Americans consume the recommended amounts of fruits, vegetables, legumes and grains? A combined seven servings of fruits and vegetables are recommended each day. Both food groups are typically low in fat and calories, and they provide healthy nutrients such as vitamins A and C, folate, fiber and potassium. These nutrients can improve everything from heart disease risk and skin health to cholesterol levels and blood pressure.

Use Portion Control

Portion sizes in America are getting bigger and bigger. As portions increase, so do our appetites. Try these easy strategies for limiting portions:

- ✧ Split a meal when eating out with a group.
- ✧ Pre-portion snacks to avoid overeating.
- ✧ Use smaller plates to trick your brain into thinking you are eating more.
- ✧ Invest in healthy options. You eat what you buy.

Remember that nutrition needs vary based on individual health factors such as lifestyle, weight and chronic disease. Consult your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about the right nutrition plan to follow.

Sources: 1. Center for Disease Control and Prevention – <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html>. 2. The Cleveland Clinic – <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/17281-nutrition-strategies>. 3. The Mayo Clinic – <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/fat/art-20045550>. 4. United States Department of Agriculture – <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/fruits-nutrients-health>

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