

NUTRITION: How Important Is It?

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Mental Health:

Needed to make chemicals (neurotransmitters) that keep mental and emotional balance.

Physical Health:

Needed to keep healthy, repair and maintain the body tissues, organs and functions.

Important Nutrients

1. **Carbohydrates (Carbs) = energy** “Good carbs” found in grains, beans/legumes, vegetables, fruits, & honey “Cruciferous” vegetables help prevent colon cancer (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussel sprouts).
2. **Fats = energy** - Fats make steroid hormones (ex. estrogen, testosterone, cortisol), help nerve cells work, keep skin soft, and make Vitamin D. Found in fatty meats (beef, pork), butter, cream, margarine, vegetable oils, nuts, and fried foods. Limit fat intake to 25-30% of dietary intake. Include red meat up to 3 times a week for iron and fat.
3. **Proteins** = growth & repair of cells, tissues, antibodies, enzymes and hormones. Found in dried beans, peas, nuts, meat, soy products, fish, poultry, eggs, and dairy products.
4. **Vitamins** = normal growth and development, breaking down food. Found in beans, peas, nuts, fruits, vegetables, whole grains/enriched breads and cereals, meat, and fortified milk.

Common vitamins include:

- B12, B6 and folate = mental health, energy level, make red blood cells & help prevent/treat anemia.
- B1 (Thiamine) = energy, nervous system function.
- C = helps the immune system keep you from becoming sick; helps keep joints & support tissues (collagen) strong.
- D = needed to absorb Calcium. for strong bones, teeth, and blood clotting.
- E = helps protect the nervous system (caution with blood thinners such as Coumadin or NSAIDS (ex. Aspirin, Ibuprofen/Motrin, Aleve/Naprosyn/Naproxen, Feldene/Piroxicam)).

5. **Minerals** = normal growth and development, breaking down food. Found in nuts, whole grains, enriched bread and cereals; meat, fish, poultry, dairy products, vegetables, and fruit.
 - **Calcium** = strong bones, teeth, and also help blood to clot.
 - **Potassium** = keeps your heart beating regular.
 - **Sodium** = nervous system BUT too much can lead to high blood pressure. Occurs naturally in shellfish, softened water (ex. Culligan water filtering system), fish, eggs, meats, poultry, and milk products. High amount added to commercially prepared foods (fast foods, canned foods, soups, some frozen foods, sauces, gravies, pickles, ketchup, snack foods, and tomato products). **READ THE LABEL.**
6. **Flavonoids** = promote health. Water soluble. Give color to fruits (ex. Grapes), vegetables (eggplant), some edible flowers (ex. Nasturtiums), grains, tea, and garlic. Garlic helps prevent infection, lowers blood pressure, and can help fight against cancer.
7. **Water** = needed for life itself (adult body is made up of 60-70% water). Maintains normal body temperature, moves nutrients to where they are needed in the body, and many body chemical reactions happen in water.

Food Pyramid + Exercise

Plus Exercise = nergy, help control weight, healthy heart, improve mood. At least 30 minutes each day. Before starting any exercise program, ask your doctor what is safe for you to do. Start slow and gradually increase to avoid hurting yourself.



Sources:

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