

Nutrition



What is a Healthy, Balanced Diet?

Based on current research a healthy, balanced diet means that you:

- Eat a variety of foods throughout the day and week.
- Select more fruits and vegetables and whole grains.
- Limit saturated fat (animal, coconut and palm kernel fats) and cholesterol. Substitute “healthier oils” such as olive and canola.
- Select smaller portions of food and beverages, especially if you want to lose weight.



Read on for more detail:

Enjoy a Variety of Food

The best standard is the **Food Guide Pyramid**. The original pyramid recommends the following **per day**:

Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta 6-11 servings

Vegetables 3-5 servings

Fruits 2-4 servings

Milk, Yogurt and Cheese 2-3 servings

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs and Nuts 2-3 servings



(For more information request a “Food Guide Pyramid” handout)

A variety of food is important because no one food gives you all the nutrients (carbohydrates, protein and fat) your body needs each day. Food contains important vitamins and minerals for the proper working of our bodies.

New research is finding that fruits, vegetables and whole grains contain plant based ingredients (antioxidants and phytochemicals) that might help reduce the risk for various diseases. They also provide important fiber for the body. **(For more information request “Meeting Vitamin and Mineral Needs” or “Fiber Guidelines” handouts)**

Fats in the Diet

Diets high in saturated fats from animal products and “tropical fats” clogs arteries and increase the risk of heart disease.

Saturated Fats:

- Animal fats are found in butter, lard, cream, whole milk and high fat dairy products; beef, pork, lamb, chicken, turkey, fish, and shellfish.
- Tropical fats are coconut and palm kernel.
- Hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fats (solid fat like stick margarine and fats found in many packages snacks) increases the Saturated and Trans Fatty Acid content which makes them more harmful.

References: Food Guide Pyramid A Guide to Daily Food Choices-U.S Dept. of Agriculture and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

www.americanheart.org

www.haagen-dazs.com

www.pizzahut.com

www.edy's.com

Animal Fats:

- Only animal foods contain cholesterol. Therefore, meat, eggs and dairy foods need to be limited in amount or lower fat cuts of meat and lower fat dairy products need to be eaten.

Heart Healthy Fats:

We need some fat in our diet because fat contains essential fatty acids important for healthy cells. Fat also takes longer to digest so we feel full longer. When you eat fat:

- Choose heart healthy fats (mono unsaturated fats) like olive, canola and peanut or poly unsaturated fats (safflower and corn) and less saturated fat.
- Fat in the form of oil or whipped margarines are the best to use.

Not only can fat increase your risk for heart disease and some cancers it also contains a lot of calories.

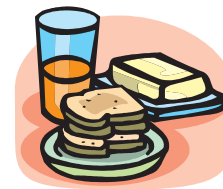
Limit fat but don't eliminate it from your diet.
(For more information request a "Low Fat Guidelines" handout)

Portion Size

Besides cutting down on high fat foods, it is important to reduce the portion size of food eaten. Limiting portion size can be beneficial if you want to lose weight.

Examples of different portion sizes:

- 4 slices of Meat Lover's thin crust pizza vs. 2 slices
(Save 620 calories and 38 grams of fat)
- * 3 cans (12 oz) regular soda vs. diet soda
(Save 450 calories)
- 3 scoops or 1 1/2 cups of super premium chocolate chip ice cream vs. 2 scoops of lower fat
(Save 360 calories and 48 grams of fat)



Spacing of Meals

Food provides fuel, in the form of carbohydrates, protein and fat. We need these nutrients in order to survive. If we don't fuel the body regularly, it gets tired and sluggish. Eating moderate size meals and small snacks throughout the day, containing a mixture of carbohydrates and protein and some fat, keeps blood sugar more level which helps you feel better.

Balance Eating with Activity

Balanced eating also suggests that you balance the calories you eat with the activity you get each day. If you want to keep your body healthy, generally feel better and prevent weight gain you need to balance activity with what you eat. Be sure to check with your doctor before being an exercise program.

**Hopefully now you know a little more about what it means to eat a healthy, balanced diet.
Give it a try for your health and well-being.**

**For more information or to speak with an OSF Saint Francis Registered, Licensed Dietitian
Call 655-3705 (hospital), 282-1600 (RiverPlex), 655-7936 (Penn. Avenue Office).**

Need more suggestions for a healthier lifestyle? OSF Saint Francis Wellness Services
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