

# GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR A HEALTHY DIET AND LIFESTYLE

Bottom line: **eat whole foods** that are unprocessed and eat as many **veggies, fruits and whole grains** as possible. Stay away from refined sugar and white flour and anything that is overly processed. Everything in MODERATION!

## Fat vs. Carbs

Recent studies show that saturated fat isn't as bad as we have been led to believe. It actually has some important health benefits. A high carb diet, on the other hand, has shown to increase cholesterol. Carbs are absorbed into the blood as sugar. This triggers insulin to reduce the blood sugar, but it also signals the body to store fat. Therefore the liver converts blood sugar into triglycerides (i.e. fat in the blood). Those spikes in blood sugar will also make you crash, have low energy (maybe even get grumpy and depressed) and then crave more food. Try to **eat whole grains** and **avoid sugar**. Whole grains maintain your blood sugar as opposed to the refined grains and sugars that spike your blood sugar.

Note: cinnamon helps regulate blood sugar.

Note: wheat gluten is difficult for some to digest.

**The key is to not over eat.** When you eat more calories than you burn you store fat in the body and in the blood. Studies show that regardless of the source of calories (saturated fat or carbs), eating too much puts you at high risk of various diseases, especially heart disease.

Healthy sources of saturated fat: dairy products, coconut oil, organic meats

## Whole foods and Antioxidants

Minimally processed foods are highest in antioxidants, which help clear out inflammation in the body and clear free radicals that can damage the cells and cause disease (cancer, heart disease etc).

Antioxidants are best from food sources, not supplements, so eat your **veggies of all colors**, especially the green ones – that is most important. They are packed with antioxidants and vitamins, as are fruit, whole grains, beans/legumes, herbs, spices and teas.

## Sugar

**AVOID like the plague:**

high fructose corn syrup, all artificial sweeteners, refined white sugar

**WHY?** Because they contribute to diabetes, metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disease, obesity, and high cholesterol

**Better alternative:** maple syrup, honey, agave syrup, stevia, unrefined sugar (i.e. sucanat, turbinado)

## Fats

**AVOID like the plague:**

hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, margarine, shortening i.e. fried foods, chips etc

**WHY?** They are trans fats which increase cholesterol, and contribute to diabetes and heart disease

**GOOD:** olive oil, essential fatty acids/omega 3's (as flax oil or fish oil), nuts

**OK in moderation:** butter

## Lifestyle

- The obvious: sleep well, don't smoke, moderate alcohol, maintain healthy weight, and manage stress
- Exercise – even if you aren't an athlete, at least take a walk every day for 30 min – it does wonders!
- Stretch – for a few minutes a day at least to get the blood flowing
- Take a deep breath of fresh air every day
- Eat seasonal foods (i.e. salads in summer and stews in winter)
- Filter your tap water
- Avoid storing food and drink in plastic containers – use glass or metal instead
- Never microwave in plastic
- Eat organic when possible to decrease chemical load and genetically modified food. Buy local produce to limit fossil fuel emissions
- Avoid deep sea fish high in mercury (tuna, swordfish)
- Avoid MSG and aspartame – both are excitotoxins
- Start reading labels and be aware of things that are put into food that aren't necessary. The shorter the list of (pronounceable) ingredients, the better!

## Supplements

If you find vitamins necessary, look for **food based vitamins**. Conventional vitamins are synthetic with low bioavailability. In addition, consider taking fish oil and probiotics.

Note on Vit D: recent studies show how important it is. Either spend 20 min/day in the sun with no sunscreen, or take cod liver oil, or look for Vit D3 (not D2) in your vitamins.

## Coffee

is ok for some, and very bad for others. If you are experiencing any of the following you might want to cut back or eliminate coffee: anxiety, trouble sleeping, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, are pregnant, or at high risk of osteoporosis (caffeine demineralizes the body). If you rely on coffee to function you are burning up your reserves. If you are tired, try sleeping and eating better instead.

## Dairy

If you are lactose intolerant, you should avoid dairy. If not, dairy such as yogurts and cheeses can be healthy. With dairy especially, buy organic. Full milk products are healthier than no fat.