

WHERE DO WE START WITH NUTRITION?

Basic rules for developing quality eating habits



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Instead of complicating things too much and trying to tell you all exactly what to eat to reach optimal health (which I couldn't do anyway). I want to invite you to adopt a few simple rules to guide your habits around eating. You may not be able to follow these rules 100% of the time but rather use them as questions to ask yourself when making decisions around your food.

4 Rules for Improved Eating Habits:

1. Prioritize Protein
2. Eat Whole Foods As Often As Possible
3. Don't Drink Your Calories
4. Make Most Of Your Meals At Home

Prioritizing protein will be a recurring topic in our discussion around nutrition. Protein is one of two essential macronutrients (fat being the other) and it serves as the building block for your entire body. Almost every time I review a client's food log I find that they are dramatically undercreating protein.

What does consuming adequate protein do for our bodies?

1. Appetite suppression: Eating a quality serving of protein will satiate you. If you are eating enough at the beginning of each meal you will have a reduction in your cravings for less optimal foods (sugar, bread, pasta, etc..)
2. Increased metabolism: Protein takes more energy to digest which increases the number of calories you burn throughout the day. While calories in vs. calories out aren't the most important aspect of nutrition it is important to increase the number of calories we are burning throughout the day (which should also be done through movement!).
3. Increase in lean body mass: For anyone who is trying to improve their body composition (decrease fat and increase muscle, bone, soft tissue) protein is the key nutrient to facilitate this process.

Eat WHOLE foods! Whole foods are simply the foods we get from nature. If I am being honest I don't know why we classify boxed, bagged, and other processed foods as food. Without spending too much time on this yet know that your health relies on you eating real food.

Whole foods are plant and animal products that cannot sit on a shelf for months or years on end and still be consumable. They are also mostly found on the outside of the grocery stores, not the center shelving aisle!

If you can leave your prepared food sitting on the counter for days on end without it spoiling is it real food?

Don't drink your calories! For anyone who is trying to lose weight, it is essential that you are not adding 1-500 or more calories throughout the day in the form of liquid. Many of us start our day out with coffee and add sugar and other sweeteners that flood our system with excess calories leaving us with dysregulated blood sugar and cravings for the rest of the day. Then we follow that up with soda or other sweet drinks at lunch to further these issues throughout the day. We should instead focus on consuming half our body weight in ounces of water each day. For example, a 200lb person should be drinking at least 100 ounces of water/day.

You don't like the taste of plain water? Try adding a 1/4 teaspoon of pink sea salt and a few lemons or lime for a better taste!

Finally, make most of your meals at home. Many people get in a rut of ordering out daily. How often are you rushing at the last minute to order lunch or dinner for the family? How often are the choices you are making in these moments optimal for you and your family's health?

Knowing what you are going to eat for the week and preparing ahead of time will be a game-changer when it comes to staying consistent with your nutrition throughout the week.

One interesting study I came across showed that when people ordered out vs made the same meal they ordered at home they had more favorable health outcomes. Regardless of the meal, they were consuming!

This is a very interesting point! You can make what would seem to be a less optimal meal but if you do that at home with your family you will have a better health response to that meal! Making your meals at home will, however, promote better food choices and set you up for success, when the fast pace of life gets in the way.

Before you eat or drink ask yourself:
Does this meal have enough protein?
Am I eating real food or processed food?
Do the extra calories in this drink align with my goals?
Did I prepare this food or did I order it?

Sometimes the answers to these questions will not be ideal, and that is okay, it happens. If you strive to follow these rules you will develop a better sense of control over your nutrition, you will have less desire for poor-quality foods, and you will build the foundation for your journey to better health.

To reach optimal health we must be PROACTIVE rather than REACTIVE. If the rules I laid out are not at the forefront of your mind you will get stuck in a perpetual cycle of being reactive to the situations around you. Choose to be proactive and take control of your eating habits.

THANK YOU FOR READING!



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