



The role of nutrition in leading a healthy lifestyle

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INTRODUCTION

Living a healthy life is one of the key goals of people in contemporary civilizations. Many people worldwide strive for this, and various groups of academics and researchers, including doctors and dieticians, provide various strategies for achieving and sustaining it. Many people believe that improving life quality, maintaining a nutritious diet, exercising, and maintaining a positive outlook are the keys to a healthy life (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). This chapter focuses on the connection between diet and leading a healthy life. The author of this chapter feels that all of these elements should work together to achieve and maintain a healthy living, thus this should not imply disregarding other facets of a healthy existence.

Well-being A healthy lifestyle, which encompasses your entire way of living, is the key to general well-being. For instance, you might frequently eat out or prepare quick meals if you are constantly on the go. A healthy lifestyle requires frequent exercise, stress management techniques, and a balanced diet. The processes by which nutrients in food are absorbed, assimilated, and used for maintenance, development, and energy are referred to as nutrition (Stockslager et al., 2002). Generally speaking, diversified and different sources of nourishment in proportionate amounts without excess are considered to be part of good nutrition. In addition, it entails eating breakfast every day, making sensible meal and snack choices, drinking adequate water and other liquids, and keeping a healthy weight. For a healthy existence, enough nourishment is essential, but not sufficient. Additionally, one should receive regular medical and dental examinations, sleep for at least eight hours every day, exercise for at least sixty minutes, and maintain decent cleanliness. **A nutritious diet** A varied and well-balanced diet is the key to a healthy diet. It doesn't imply eating excessively or insufficiently. Both the quantity and quality of food consumed are crucial factors. Eating a wide range of nutritious meals helps prevent chronic disease and promotes excellent health, as many would argue (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2015). Consuming a range of meals from each of the various food categories on a daily basis is the definition of a diverse, well-balanced diet. Additionally, the quantity of food must be carefully considered.

The diversity of foods within each food group should also be taken into account. Food categories are available in varying amounts from different sources. I used the Seven Food Groups provided by a state government in the United States and the Five Food Groups provided by the Australian Government's website (Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, 2015) for this chapter.

Food Groups :

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (2015) lists five main dietary groups: fruits, grains, lean meats and other protein sources, vegetables, legumes, and dairy products. **Dairy:** This category of foods contains a lot of calcium, which is necessary for strong, healthy bones. Dairy foods have a higher calcium content than most other foods in our diet. Dairy foods include things like cheese, ice cream, yogurt, and milk. Bone health is influenced by a diet high in vitamin D and protein. Dairy products are an excellent option for keeping strong bones because of their high protein, vitamin D, and calcium content. They are particularly crucial for adolescents and young children.

Fruit:

Fruit helps your body stay healthy by providing vitamins, minerals, dietary fiber, and a variety of phytonutrients, which are nutrients found naturally in plants. You can reach your daily required serves by prioritizing fruit over "occasional" or "extra" items like pies, crisps, cookies, cakes, lollipops, and chocolate. According to data from the Australian National Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey (2007), when fruit juice is taken into account, 93% of children aged four to eight consume the required amounts of fruit. When juice is taken out of the equation, this percentage drops to 61%, and as children become older, both of these numbers sharply decline. Consuming fruit daily can help avoid excessive weight gain because it has fewer kilojoules (energy) than many other foods.

Additionally, eating fruit may help prevent chronic illnesses including heart disease, stroke, and some types of cancer. It's crucial to choose a range of colors each day because different fruits can protect the body in different ways. Examples include: • green (apples, grapes, and kiwi fruit); • orange (oranges, mangoes, and peaches); and • yellow and red (bananas, strawberries).

* purple (grapes, plums, and blueberries) Grain (cereal) foods: A broad range of breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa, barley, and other largely whole grain and/or high fiber foods are advised by the Australian Dietary Guidelines (2015). Refined grain (cereal) foods like cakes and biscuits that include a lot of added sugar, fat (especially saturated fat), and/or salt and sodium are not included.

* *The Glycaemic Index :*

On a scale of 0 to 100, the glycemic index (GI) ranks carbohydrates based on how much they increase blood sugar levels after meals. Fast digestion and absorption of foods with a high GI cause blood sugar levels to rise quickly. Low-GI foods are better since they raise insulin and blood sugar levels gradually because they are absorbed and digested more slowly. As a result, they give us a steady flow of energy from one meal to the next, sustaining our energy and focus levels and extending our feelings of fullness.

Lower GI grain foods :

- Whole grain bread – look bread with intact grains
- Low GI white bread
- Basmati rice, low GI white or brown rice
- Pasta
- Oats

Higher GI grain foods :

- White bread
- Jasmine and Arborio rice
- Rice cakes
- Most crispbreads
- Most flaked corn, wheat and puffed rice cereals

Nuts, seeds, fish, eggs, tofu, and lean meats and poultry:

The protein we consume is used by our body to produce specialized molecules like adrenaline and hemoglobin. Our body's tissues are also constructed, maintained, and repaired by protein. Protein makes up your heart and other organs as well as muscles. This crucial component of our daily diet consists of lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, legumes, and beans. Here are some suggestions for eating protein: Eat a variety of protein-rich foods throughout the day because they all offer distinct but essential elements. Reduce your intake of saturated fat, which is bad for your heart, by choosing lean meat and poultry.

Protein is included in foods like sausages, ham, salami, and devon, but they should only be consumed in moderation because they are heavy in saturated fat and salt. Eat just beans, eggs, almonds, or tofu for the most of your meals and cut out meat once or twice a week. Eat fish twice per week to get essential omega 3 fatty acids. Legumes, beans, and vegetables: Your daily diet should consist primarily of vegetables, which should be promoted at all meals, including snack times. To keep your body healthy, they include vitamins, minerals, dietary fiber, and phytonutrients—nutrients found naturally in plants. Just 8.6% of Australian children aged four to eight consume the recommended amounts of vegetables daily, according to research from the Australian Health Survey: Nutrition First Results - Food & Nutrients (2012). This percentage declines with age, with 4.6% of children aged nine to thirteen fulfilling their needs. Potatoes are the most widely consumed vegetable. Since vegetables are low in kilojoules (energy) relative to many other foods, including them every day can help prevent excessive weight gain.

They may also help protect against chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke and some types of cancers.

Different vegetables and fruit can help protect the body in different ways, so choose a variety of colours everyday, such as:

* Green (broccoli, spinach, peas)

* Orange (carrots, pumpkin, sweet potatoes)

* Yellow and red (capsicum, tomatoes, corn).

* purple (beetroot and purple cabbage)

The following chart taken from Australian Guide to Healthy Eating illustrates the five food groups. Besides these five basic food groups, some other organizations offer Seven Food Groups namely (a) Milk + Dairy, (b) Vegetables, (c) Fruits, (d) Grains, (e) Meat + Beans, (f) Sweets + Fats and (g) Beverages. I have discussed, in detail, the first five

Food groups and will refer to the last two in this section. Sweets and Fats: Oils are the major source of fatty acids that are necessary for Health—called “essential fatty acids.”

While consuming some oil is needed for health, oils still contain calories. In fact,

Oils and solid fats both contain about 120 calories per tablespoon. Therefore, the amount of oil consumed needs to be limited to balance total calorie intake. In addition to

Vegetable oils, such as olive, canola and soybean oils, a number of foods are naturally high in fats, like:

Nuts

Olives

Oily fish

Avocados

A popular sweet treat with additional health advantages is chocolate. Flavonoids, which have antioxidant properties, are present in it. Antioxidants guard against free radical-induced aging, which can harm the body and result in heart disease. Chocolate has healthful elements, but it doesn't mean you should consume too much of it. Chocolate sweets and bars are frequently heavy in calories, fat, and sugar.

Dark chocolate has more health benefits than milk chocolate, and moderation is always the key! Because they may include health-promoting photochemical, many of which are still being discovered, sweets and fats can help promote optimal health. Drinks: Think carefully about what you consume and make sure each sip matters if you're trying to find healthy eating ideas. As functional foods, beverages including milk, red wine, hot cocoa, and tea are important sources of antioxidants and other nutrients that shouldn't be disregarded. Most Americans don't get enough milk each day, so hot chocolate made with milk helps make sure you receive the recommended amount. It also provides calcium and protein. Important antioxidants like resveratrol and catechins can be found in red wine and tea. Knowing that these drinks have health advantages in addition to taste is helpful when making wise choices. It is crucial to choose nutrient-rich beverages and take into account their nutritional content because it is simple to ignore the extra calories they can add to the diet. Beverages are considered functional foods because they include health-promoting photochemical, many of which are still being discovered, that assist sustain optimal health in addition to the fundamental health advantages of some beverages.

In addition to eating a varied and balanced diet that includes foods from the previously mentioned food groups, one should remember to get adequate fiber each day and avoid eating unhealthy foods sometimes.

LINK BETWEEN EATING HABITS AND DISEASES :

Interesting findings regarding the diet-disease relationship were obtained from the most recent studies that investigated the connection between dietary practices and illnesses. For instance, a study by Trichopoulou et al. (1995) discovered that those who adhered to the Mediterranean diet more had lived longer than those who did not.

Similarly, WHO Technical Report Series (No. 916) (2002) addresses the connection between people's eating habits and conditions like obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer, among others. They come to the conclusion that maintaining a healthy weight at all stages of life requires eating nutrient-dense foods and striking a balance between calorie consumption and the required amount of physical activity. Energy excess, overweight, and obesity are caused by the unbalanced ingestion of foods high in energy (sugar, starch, and/or fat) and low in vital nutrients. The quality of food and the quantity of energy ingested in connection to physical activity are important factors that influence chronic diseases linked to nutrition.

CONCLUSION:

A varied and balanced diet is strongly associated with a healthy life, as I have attempted to illustrate in this chapter. The Australian Health Survey made the following recommendations to help us maintain our health and live long, healthy lives: • Eating a wide range of nutritious foods helps prevent chronic disease and promotes excellent health. • Consuming a range of foods from each of the five food categories on a daily basis in the prescribed amounts is known as having a diversified, well-balanced diet.

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