Nutrition For Optimal Energy

A Work Life Wellness Toolkit


WORK
LIFE
WELLNESS

Forward

Nutrition is the foundation of health and wellness. A healthy diet is one that provides a person with enough energy to support activities of daily living (everything from breathing to changing a lightbulb) and daily exercise.

The quality and quantity of the food a person eats and the beverages a person drinks play a role in their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. If these are not on-point, they will not be able to function at their best.

Choosing a varied diet of nutrient-dense foods is the best way to give the body the nutrients it needs so a person has enough energy to function at their best throughout the day.

This toolkit will help you, help your colleagues at Post, make strong nutrition decisions.

Your ability to be fully engaged physically, mentally and emotionally is compromised if you are not eating properly,

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Nutrition 101

Salt

Salt (sodium chloride) helps us conduct nerve impulses, contract and relax muscles, and to maintain the proper balance of water and minerals. But when it comes to salt, a little goes a long way. Too much salt can lead to high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke.

The current recommended daily limit for U.S. adults is 1 teaspoon with some experts calling for it to be lowered to 2/3 teaspoon.

Most Americans, however, consume 1.5 teaspoons of salt per day, well above both the current and

Excess sodium can increase your blood pressure, and your risk for heart disease and stroke.

the suggested limit. This explains why nearly 70 percent of U.S. adults are at risk of developing health problems associated with excess salt consumption.

At-Risk individuals include:

- People over 50 years of age
- People who have high or slightly elevated blood pressure
- People who have diabetes
- African Americans

It is also suggested that children's sodium intake be managed, as becoming conditioned to high-salt tastes in childhood can make it hard to cut back later in life.

Keep in mind that salt is an acquired taste; it generally takes 6-8 weeks to adjust to eating lower-sodium foods.

Here are some tips to reduce salt intake:

- Reducing portion sizes of salty foods (e.g. olives, cheeses, pickles, soy sauce)
- Cook your own meals with fresh, unprocessed ingredients
- Check your labels: even processed/packaged foods that don't taste salty can have a lot of salt in them; remember salt adds up throughout the day too.
- Try reduced– or no-sodium alternatives for flavorful cooking. If the alternatives are potassium-based, check with your doctor first.
- When buying frozen vegetables, check that they are labeled "frozen fresh" and do not contain added seasoning or sauces.
- If dining out, see if nutrition information is available for the restaurant and compare sodium levels for the various menu options.

Hydration

Staying hydrated is more important than you might think; even being 1 percent dehydrated is linked to slowed working memory, increased tension/anxiety and fatigue, and increased errors on visual vigilance.

Water is key to staying hydrated, however all fluids you consume (e.g. coffee, tea, milk, juice)

Approximately 75 percent of Americans are Chronically dehydrated.

contribute to the amount of fluid you need to consume to stay hydrated. The amount of fluid you need depends on several factors including physical activity, weather, gender, and age. A general recommendation for adults is 1.6L per day for women and 2L per day for men.

Although, all liquids count toward your needed fluid consumption, some may be high in calories (e.g. specialty coffees and teas, juices, and soft drinks.) These

calories count toward your daily caloric intake just like food, so it's important to be mindful of the amount of calories you consume from beverages. Water should be your first choice for fluids; it's absorbed into your bloodstream quickly and has none of the drawbacks that other fluids can have (e.g. high caffeine, high sugar, high acidity).

Here are some tips to stay hydrated and to make water your go-to beverage:

- Drink before you're thirsty. By the time you feel thirsty, you're already dehydrated.
- Drink small amounts at a time, rather than gulping, it's more effective.
- Consume water throughout the day.
- Monitor fluid loss to determine if you are drinking too much or too little.
- Try drinking a glass after every bathroom break.
- Use an app to track your cups per day.
- Keep a water bottle nearby to help refill and encourage use.
- Try sparkling or mineral water over soda.
- Sip before every meal.
- Try adding some lemon or lime juice to your water for flavor.

Sugar & Sweeteners

Sugar-sweetened foods and beverages are problematic because they add extra calories without adding nutritional value. Added sugars are often found in foods that contain solid fats (e.g. butter, margarine, shortening in baked goods).

Sugar is added to approximately 80 percent of processed foods in U.S. stores.

Consuming too many of these foods can put you at risk for potential health problems, such as: weight gain, increased triglycerides, tooth decay, and chronic diseases like Type 2 diabetes. U.S. adults currently get 13 percent of their total daily calories from added sugar.

The 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend no more than 10 percent of your daily calories come from added sugars. For a 2,000 calorie diet, this means no more than 200 calories (12 teaspoons) a day should come from added sugars. For perspective: a 12-ounce can of regular soda contains about 10 teaspoons of sugar.

Here are some tips to help you cut back on your sugar intake:

1) Know and look for sugar's many names on food labels:

- sucrose
- glucose
- fructose
- maltose
- fruit juice
- molasses
- hydrolysed starch
- invert sugar
- corn syrup
- honey

2) Make sugar swaps by comparing labels of similar foods and opting for the ones with less sugar. For example:

- Choose plain cereals over sugary cereals
- Try seltzer or club soda over sodas.
- Chose fresh or frozen fruits over canned fruits in syrups, dried fruits, or jams/jellies.
- Use unsweetened apple sauce instead of sugar in recipes.

3) When you do want to treat yourself to say a baked good or sweetened drink, chose a smaller portion.

Carbs, Protiens, Fats

Carbs: are your body's preferred energy source so you need some in your diet. Aim for complex carbohydrates, such as vegetables, fruits, beans and legumes, brown or long-grain rice, and whole grains. Avoid processed carbohydrates, like: white bread, pastries, sodas, and candy.

Also, be aware that low-fat and non-fat foods can contain more carbohydrates than the original versions; food manufacturers often replace the fats with carbs. It's important to read and compare labels.

Fats: are the second energy choice for your body. Healthy fats contribute to a sense of satiety; help you absorb Vitamins A, D, E and K; help with brain development; controlling inflammation; blood clotting; and insulation. Like carbs, there are healthy fats and unhealthy fats. Healthy fats are mono and polyunsaturated fats, unhealthy fats are trans fats, and saturated fats are considered to be somewhere in between.

When choosing fats, stick to monounsaturated or polyunsaturated.

Monounsaturated fats: these plant-based oils reduce heart disease more than any other oils.

Polyunsaturated fats: these plant-based oils with omeg-3 fatty acids help to reduce heart disease.

Trans fat: man-made. Partially

hydrogenated vegetable oils increase heart dz more than other oils (e.g. margarine, shortening)

Saturated fats: these fats, mainly from animal sources like dairy and butter are also found in tropical oils like coconut, palm and palm kernel oils. Less than 10% of total daily calories should come from Sat. Fat.

The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend avoiding trans fats, keeping saturated fats to less than 10 percent of daily calories; and getting the majority of your daily fat needs from unsaturated fats. You can do this by reading and comparing food labels; making healthy swaps; and cutting back on portion sizes or avoiding processed foods all together.

Protein: Protein's main role is to build and repair tissue (like muscle) and fight infection. The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend 46 grams of protein per day for women over 19 years of age, and 56 grams per day for men over 19 years of age.

Strong choices for dietary protein include: lean meats, fish, eggs, low-fat or non-fat dairy, soy, beans and legumes, and nuts and seeds (but watch your serving size because they are high in fat).

U.S. and International Food Labels, Common Conversions

Eating for optimal energy starts by reading and comparing foo llabels. Here's how:

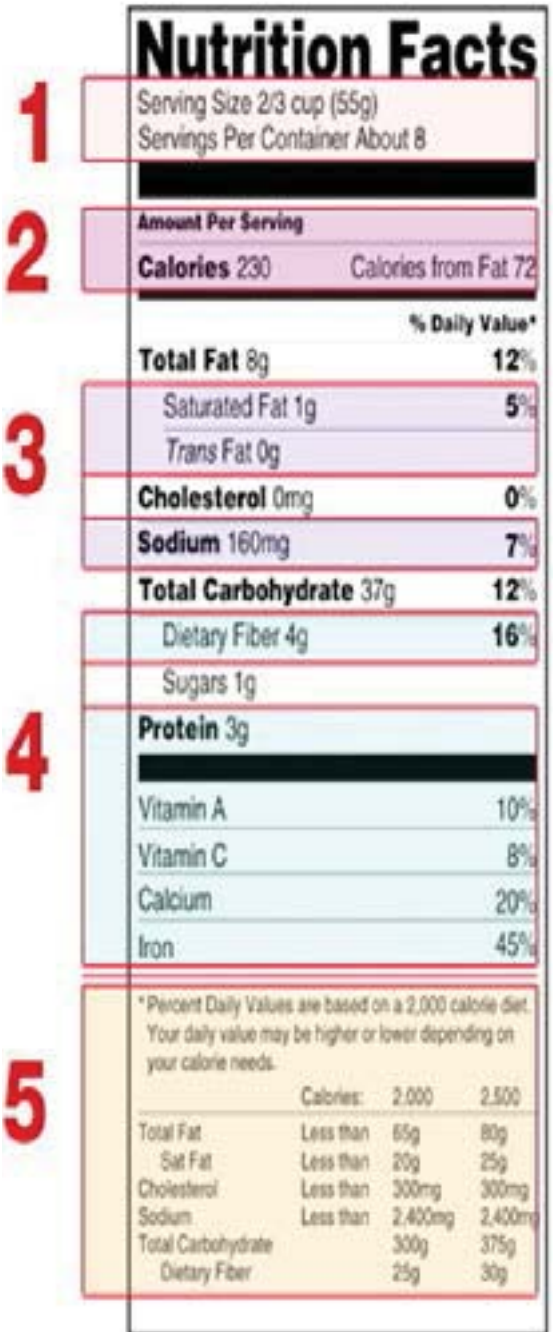
1. Start with the serving information at the top of the label. This will tell you the size of a single serving and the total number of servings per container (package).

2. Next, check total calories per serving.

When looking at nutriion labels, be sure to look at the serving size.

Pay attention to the calories per serving and how many servings you're really consuming if you eat the whole package. If you double the servings you eat, you double the calories and nutrients.

3. Limit these nutrients. Based on a 2,000 calorie diet, no more than 11-13 grams of saturated fat, as little trans fat as possible, and no more than 1,500 mg of sodium.



Make sure you get enough of beneficial nutrients such as: dietary fiber, protein, calcium, iron, vitamins and other nutrients you need every day.

The % Daily Value (DV) tells you the percentage of each nutrient in a single serving, in terms of the daily recommended amount.

As a guide, if you want to consume less of a nutrient (such as saturated fat or sodium), choose foods with a lower percent DV — 5 percent or less. If you want to consume more of a nutrient (such as fiber), seek foods with a higher percent DV — 20 percent or more.

If you frequently travel outside the U.S. or live abroad, you will notice that food labels look different outside the U.S. and may not be used at all.

For example, the EU food labels, list calories based on 100g not serving size and servings per container. This makes it a bit easier to compare nutritional content of like items (e.g. cereals) but potentially harder to know just how many servings are in an item.

You may find it helpful to familiarize yourself with common English to Metric conversions (listed on the following page).

Learning how to eyeball portion sizes will also be helpful. The next section will assist you with this.

Solids	Liquids
25 g = 1 oz	25 ml = 1 oz
50 g = 2 oz	50 ml = 2 oz
75 g = 3 oz	75 ml = 3 oz
100 g = 4 oz	110 ml = 4 oz
125 g = 4.5 oz	125 ml = 4.5 oz
150 g = 5 oz	150 ml = 5 oz
175 g = 6 oz	175 ml = 6 oz
200 g = 8 oz	200 ml = 7 oz
250 g = 9 oz	225 ml = 8 oz
325 g = 12 oz	250 ml = 8.5 oz
350 g = 12.5 oz	275 ml = 10 oz
375 g = 13 oz	300 ml = 10.5 oz
400 g = 14 oz	350 ml = 12 oz
450 g = 1 lb	400 ml = 14 oz
700 g = 1.5 lb	450 ml = 16 oz
1 kg = 2.5 lb	575 ml = 20 oz (pt)

Dining In & Out

Meal planning can save you time, money, and sanity by helping you stick to your eating-plan goals and avoid turning to fast food at hurried meal times.

Here are some tips to make meal planning fun and simple:

Think about your schedule for the upcoming week and take it a week at a time:

- When will you have time to shop for the week?
- How many meals will you eat in a day and where?
- How many do you need (or want) to pack?
- What are your favorite foods and how to they fit into your eating plan?

Take inventory:

- What do you already have in your fridge, freezer and pantry?
- What can you make with those foods?
- What needs to be used first?

Get Organized:

- Check grocery ads; many come out on

Hand Symbol	Equivalent	Foods
	**Fist** 1 Cup	Rice, Pasta Fruit, Veggies
	**Palm** 3 Ounces	Meat Fish Poultry
	**Handful** 1 Ounce	Nuts Raisins
	**2 Handfuls** 1 Ounce	Chips Popcorn Pretzels
	**Thumb** 1 Ounce	Peanut Butter Hard Cheese
	**Thumb Tip** 1 Teaspoon	Cooking Oil Mayonnaise Butter Sugar

Wednesday and run through the following Tuesday. Meal planning on Tuesdays might be a good idea.

- What's on sale that you like, that will fit with what you already have on-hand to make full meals?
- What else do you need?
- How many servings of each meal do you need?
- Make a list of what you need to buy.
- Make a meal calendar so you remember what you've decided to cook on what day and for what meal. (e.g. Wednesday lunch is butternut squash soup and a half-turkey sandwich.)

Shop:

- Stick to your list in the store: The average shopper spends 40% more on impulse purchases when shopping without a list.
- Cook/Prep for the week:
  - A lot of meal planners find it helpful to cook everything for the week on one day (e.g. Saturday or Sunday) and then store the food safely in the fridge or freezer in meal-sized portions.
  - Others, prefer to prepare meals on the day of, but do much of the prep work (e.g. washing, chopping, peeling) all on one day in advance. Experiment with both approaches and see what fits your personality best.

Get creative:

- If you're not sure what to make, ask friends and family for ideas.
- Make a theme night or two.
- Spend time exploring cookbooks, blogs or magazines.
- Peruse the frozen dinner aisle and then make your own, fresh versions of the ones that catch your eye.

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Healthy Eating for Kids

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans offers science-based recommendations for children 2-years of age and older, because of the unique eating patterns, and developmental stages of infants and toddlers from birth to 24 months of age.

The guidelines for children are similar to those for adults, focusing on the important nutrients from vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, proteins and fats.

Like adults, children need a diet that focuses on nutrient-dense, whole foods and limits added sugars, saturated fats and trans fats.

As far as how much of these nutrients children need, the guidelines recommend the following:

16 percent of U.S. children are obese; Since 1980, obesity rates for children have tripled.

Ages 2-3
Girls & Boys

Calories	1,000-1,400, depending on growth and activity level
Protein	2-4 ounces
Fruits	1-1.5 cups
Vegetables	1-1.5 cups
Grains	3-5 ounces
Dairy	2 cups

Calories	1,200-2,000, depending on growth and activity level
Protein	3-5.5 ounces
Fruits	1-2 cups
Vegetables	1.5-2.5 cups
Grains	4-6 ounces
Dairy	2.5 cups

Ages 4-8 Girls

Ages 9-12 Girls

Calories	1,200-1,800, depending on growth and activity level
Protein	3-5 ounces
Fruits	1-1.5 cups
Vegetables	1.5-2.5 cups
Grains	4-6 ounces
Dairy	2.5 cups

Calories	1,400-2,200, depending on growth and activity level
Protein	4-6 ounces
Fruits	1.5-2 cups
Vegetables	1.5-3 cups
Grains	5-7 ounces
Dairy	3 cups

Ages 4-8 Boys

Ages 9-12 Boys

Calories	1,600-2,600, depending on growth and activity level
Protein	5-6.5 ounces
Fruits	1.5-2 cups
Vegetables	2-3.5 cups
Grains	5-9 ounces
Dairy	3 cups

Ages 14-18 Girls

Calories	1,800-2,400, depending on growth and activity level
Protein	5-6.5 ounces
Fruits	1.5-2 cups
Vegetables	2.5-3 cups
Grains	6-8 ounces
Dairy	3 cups

Ages 14-18 Boys

Calories	2,000-3,200, depending on growth and activity level
Protein	5.5-7 ounces
Fruits	2-2.5 cups
Vegetables	2.5-4 cups
Grains	6-10 ounces
Dairy	3 cups

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has a robust online resource library for more information and tips related to specific nutrition-related guidance for babies, toddlers, preschoolers, grade-schoolers and teens. You can access it via: http://www.eatright.org/resources/kids-eat-right-listing/?active=articles.

You may also consult your medical provider and/or a Registered Dietician.

Special Situations

Office Meetings

- If you're going to promote healthy lifestyles in your Post/Annex, support your people by sticking to a healthy meeting policy. This will help you create a culture of health and wellness instead of accidentally sabotaging your colleagues' efforts.
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- General Recommendations Include:
- Stick to fruit, veggies, and whole-grains.
- Avoid the empty-calorie foods like donuts, muffins, and cookies.
- Make water the default beverage. You can include sparkling waters or seltzers too.
- Avoid or limit sugary beverages by sticking to 100% juice, and no sodas.
- Offer low-fat or non-fat milk with coffee/tea.

Making over your meetings by providing health food and beverages choices goes a long way in fostering a healthy work environment.

- Offer reasonable portion-sizes.
- Offer condiments and dressings on the side.
- Avoid fried foods by choosing grilled, poached, broiled, braised, roasted or baked items.

Cultural Considerations

Food is an important part of any culture. Consider modifying your usual diet to better integrate into and explore the culture.

Be polite and accept food and drink that is offered. If unsure about the ingredients, just try a small portion.

If you do not drink alcohol, it is polite to take some in your glass for a toast .

If you do not eat or drink certain foods/drink due to religious or health reasons, politely decline with a short explanation.

Be prepared to find a tactful way to deal with social situations in which you are offered specially prepared meals that may not fit your diet.

Learn the host country's nutrition labeling system in order to make healthier choices for you and your family.

When your presence is required at mandatory functions, follow the recommended tips from the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition:

1. Drink water before you start to eat.
2. Put your meal on a salad plate, if appropriate.
3. Have 90% of what you need on your plate, 10% of what you want.

Prioritize fitness into your day, especially if you know you will be attending a work function later in the day.

During the holidays, men and women are more likely to use food and alcohol to reduce stress compared to the rest of the year.

Holidays

Holidays can be a stressful time for people who are trying to stick to a new, healthier way of eating. You can help your colleagues by promoting the following general tips:

- Focus on socializing not the food.
- Stick to your healthy meeting

policy with only a few holiday treats added in, giving people options.

- Never go to a party hungry and don't skip meals to "save up" for party or dining out binges.
- Remind colleagues to be realistic and that enjoying a holiday treat is not the end of the world.
- Watch the beverages. Specialty beverages and alcohol can be surprisingly high in calories.

For more specific tips related to certain holidays, visit the British Nutrition Foundation website. It has tips for the following:

- Ramadan
- Chinese New Year
- Christmas
- Easter
- Mother's Day
- New Year
- Valentine's Day
- Halloween

(https://www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/seasons.html)

References

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Work Life Wellness
E: medhealthpromotion@state.gov
W: diplopedia.state.gov/index.php?title=Portal:Work_Life_Wellness