



BalanceHealthSM Newsletter

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Nutrition and You

In honor of National Nutrition Month, we will review some basic nutritional guidelines and a few diets that promote a healthy lifestyle. Proper nutrition is so important to overall health and to maintaining or reaching a healthy weight. Nutrition is also important for preventing and managing chronic illnesses such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes.

In general a healthy diet is rich in nutrients including:

- Vitamins
- Minerals
- Protein
- Healthy Fats
- Fiber
- Carbohydrates
- Water

You can ensure your diet is rich in these nutrients by including fruits, vegetables, lean meats such as chicken and turkey, fatty fish such as salmon, nuts, olive oil, low fat dairy products and whole grains in the foods you eat every day.

For a healthy lifestyle it is also best to limit:

- Packaged foods with a long list of ingredients, excessive sodium or

sugar, or many unnatural ingredients that you can't pronounce

- Processed meats such as bacon, sausage, and many cold-cuts
- Fatty cuts of red meat
- Foods made with refined flour
- Fried Foods
- Alcohol

Now let's take a detailed look at two specific diets that have been shown to improve overall health and well-being.

DASH

The DASH eating plan is designed to help lower blood pressure. DASH actually stands for "Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension". The DASH eating plan includes whole grains, poultry, fish, and nuts, and has low amounts of fats, red meats, sweets, and sugared beverages. It is also high in potassium, calcium, and magnesium, as well as protein and fiber. It is very low in sodium, saturated fat, total fat and cholesterol.

Follow the DASH plan by consuming:

- 7-8 servings of whole grains per day
- 4-5 servings of vegetables per day
- 4-5 servings of fruit per day
- 2-3 servings of low fat dairy per day

For more information or advice about nutrition, contact your Wellness Coordinator by calling:

1.800.327.2255

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- 2 or fewer lean meat, poultry, or fish per day
- 4-5 servings of nuts, seeds, or legumes per week
- 2-3 servings of fats and oils per day
- 5 sweets per week

Mediterranean

The Mediterranean Diet is a healthy eating plan based off of the traditional cooking styles of the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea like Italy and Greece. The Mayo Clinic reports that “following a Mediterranean diet is associated with a reduced risk of death from heart disease and cancer, as well as a reduced incidence of Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s diseases”.

The Mediterranean diet emphasizes:

Eating primarily plant-based foods, such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts. In fact, many people from this region consume upwards of 6 antioxidant rich fruits and veggies each day. Unlike many new diet “fads”, bread is an important part of this diet, however, whole grain bread is consumed as opposed to refined flour.

Replacing butter with healthy fats, such as olive oil. People from this region tend to cook with olive oil instead of butter or margarine and even dip their bread in oil as opposed to topping it with butter. Olive oil is rich in monounsaturated fat, which can help reduce bad cholesterol.

Using herbs and spices instead of salt to flavor foods. Many herbs and spices including garlic, basil, and thyme have great

health benefits and do not raise blood pressure like salt can.

Limiting red meat to no more than a few times a month. Fatty cuts of red meat and processed meats such as bacon and sausage contain saturated fat that is unhealthy for your heart.

Eating fish and poultry each week. People from this region tend to eat fish at least twice per week and tend to choose poultry over red meat the majority of the time. Grilling, baking, and broiling fish or poultry are all great options to retain both flavor and nutrition.

Drinking red wine in moderation (optional). The Mediterranean diet typically includes a moderate amount of wine, usually red wine. This means no more than 5 ounces of wine daily for women of all ages and no more than 10 ounces of wine daily for men. More than this may increase the risk of health problems, including increased risk of certain types of cancer.

Regardless of which diet plan you choose to follow, remember that the best way to get the assortment of nutrients that your body needs is to eat a balanced variety of nutrient rich food every day, while staying within your recommended caloric needs.

Your Wellness Coach is available to help you develop a customized nutritional plan that fits your lifestyle and health goals.

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