Healthy Eating Tips

Eating healthy does not have to be difficult or complicated. In fact, eating a healthy diet can be enjoyable and sustainable by following these 5 healthy eating tips.

1. **Eat Breakfast Daily.**
   
   Eating breakfast boosts your metabolism and gives you energy to help keep you focused. A well balanced breakfast can help prevent over eating later in the day, and studies show that people who eat breakfast tend to weigh less than individuals that do not eat breakfast. Even if you are not hungry in the morning, having breakfast can help boost your energy for the rest of the day. Try to eat breakfast within one hour of waking.

   **Quick Breakfast Examples:** Yogurt, granola bar, and fruit, breakfast tacos, peanut butter and banana on toast, waffle, fruit and milk, or cottage cheese and fruit.

2. **Eat a Variety of Foods.**

   Eat a variety of Foods to ensure that your diet is nutritionally balanced. Eating the same thing every day can lead to nutrient deficiencies and health problems. By eating a variety of food you can increase your satisfaction and you can help your body get all the vitamins and minerals that it needs. Incorporate variety by choosing foods from all the different food groups, and by choosing different foods within each food group.

   **Quick Variety Tips:** Try to incorporate different colors into your diet. These colors correspond to different nutrients and phytochemicals.

3. **Eat Moderate Portions Throughout Your Day.**

   Research suggests that eating 5-6 times per day is ideal for metabolism and will help to maintain your energy throughout the day. Aim for three moderately sized meals per day with 2-3 snacks in between. For most people this translates into eating a meal or snack every 2-3 hours. Eating this frequently prevents excessive hunger that can lead to overeating for some people.

   There is no need to stress about eating at specific times or about following a specific schedule. Instead, learn to listen to your body. Eat when you are moderately-lightly hungry and stop when you are comfortably full (before you are stuffed or uncomfortable.) Eating small, frequent portions can help to moderate your intake and can help prevent overeating.
for some people. Eating this way can help to keep you energized, moderate blood sugar levels, and help with weight management.

**Quick Tips To Incorporate Moderate Portions Throughout Your Day:** Plan ahead- take your lunch and snacks with you to ensure that you are getting adequate nutrition throughout the day. In addition, check out our meal planning and snacks to pack handouts for more ideas.

4. **Stay Hydrated.**
Adequate hydration is essential for normal daily activity, vital for health, and can help with concentration. Most people need about 64oz or 8 cups of water each day. Physical activity, exposure to heat, alcohol consumption, caffeine, high fiber diets, illness, and some medications can increase the amount of fluids your body needs to maintain hydration. Good sources of fluids include: water, milk, sports drinks, and juice. You can also get fluids from the food you eat; fruits and vegetables are excellent fluid sources.

**Quick Hydration Tips:** For optimal hydration drink throughout the day and carry a bottle of water with you.

5. **Separate Food & Feelings.**
As college students, stress, strong emotions, physical and mental exhaustion may seem inevitable. Many people turn to food to help moderate these overwhelming feelings and often times do not realize they are doing so. Using food in this manner will negatively impact your health. In the short term, using caffeine, energy drinks, and sugary snacks to help you stay awake leads to a temporary rush of energy followed by an energy crash and fatigue. Long term, mindless munching and using food to deal with strong feelings will lead to weight gain. Keep in mind that focusing on food and weight will not solve your problems and can lead to more complicated issues.

**Quick Tips to Separate Food & Feelings:** Follow the first four healthy eating tips to ensure adequate intake. Handling strong emotions while over hungry or while trying to follow a restrictive diet oftentimes leads to overeating. Use these tips instead for a balanced approach. In addition, develop stress management and time management skills to protect your overall health and well-being. Try to get 7-8 hours of sleep each night and follow a regular sleep schedule. Maintain hobbies you enjoy to provide balance in your life and stress relief. If you need additional help, make an appointment to speak with a counselor on campus.