

## Health Promoting Diet

What you consume most of the time is what has the biggest impact on your health. Aim to have healthful foods 80% of the time, that gives you 4 meals/week to have foods you know are less than great – but be sensible with it, still have a basically healthy meal, maybe just a naughty side of chips/sugary dessert. Try to limit your naughty meals to one in a day.

- **Always have breakfast.**
- **Try to eat foods in as natural a state as you can, reducing processed and packaged foods.**

### Water

Water is one of the most important aspects of a healthy diet: every cell in the body needs it to perform their functions; it is essential for good blood quality; and for the removal of waste from the body (good bowel movements, urine formation, sweating and breathing).

- Keep an eye on the colour of your urine, the first urination of the day will be bright yellow but the rest of the day it should be a light yellow – if not, drink more water!
- Increase water intake gradually over a few days so your body can adjust and not have you constantly running to the toilet.
- Consider investing in a good quality water filter at home, to remove chlorine which competes with iodine to be absorbed in the gut – we need iodine for our thyroid to function properly.
- Don't rely on thirst to tell you when to drink water – you are already dehydrated when you get the thirst signal.

### Fruit and Vegetables

- Half to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all food consumed in a day will ideally be fruit and vegies.
- Aim for 2 to 3 pieces of fruit a day, and an abundance of vegies.
- Try to have most in a raw state to keep the vitamins & enzymes in your food, they are easily destroyed by cooking. Lightly steam vegetables that need cooking.
- Include a wide variety of colours to get a wide variety of beneficial compounds  
– *Eat a Rainbow!*
- Include lots of dark green leafy vegies (ditch the iceberg lettuce, replace with cos lettuce or spinach).

### Protein

- Have some form of protein with each meal, it doesn't have to be meat. Eggs, dairy, grains (wheat, rice etc.) nuts and seeds, beans and legumes all contain protein.
- Keep meat servings to about the size of your palm (including equivalent thickness)

- Choose **free-range or pasture fed** over grain fed (a natural diet for the animal produces meat that is wholesome with naturally balanced oil content).

**Oils** - Our diets are generally far too high in Omega 6 oils and far too low in Omega 3 oils. They need to be in balance to control inflammation properly. We need inflammation to stimulate healing, the increased blood supply brings more immune cells to destroy pathogens and also brings more nutrients to speed healing. But too much Omega 6 can cause prolonged inflammation or an over-reactive immune system. We need to restore the balance between Omega 3s and Omega 6s.

- **Increase Omega 3 rich foods**
  - ❖ oily fish like salmon, sardines, tuna, mackerel, & herrings, cod liver oil and walnuts.
  - ❖ flaxseed meal or oil - great on salads.
  - ❖ chia seeds (also high in fibre & protein) - great sprinkled on cereal, salads or sandwiches.
- **Decrease Omega 6 rich foods**
  - ❖ Vegetable oils, margarine, sunflower oil, soybean oil, corn oil, grapeseed oil – replace with olive oil, coconut oil, butter, avocado.
  - ❖ Check labels on all packaged foods for the type of oil used.
- **Avoid trans fats**, they interfere with the normal function of cells and increase the risk of chronic health concerns like heart disease cancer, obesity, and infertility. Check the labels carefully!
- Choose **cold-pressed extra virgin oils**, organic if possible. Use safflower, rice bran or avocado oil for cooking above 220°, olive oil for other cooking, and coconut oil or a little butter below 180°. Use water instead for cooking if you can.
- A fish oil or cod-liver oil supplement may be useful to help bring down existing inflammation.

**Cereal, grains, sugar** - These can provide fibre and/or energy, but choose slow energy releasing versions (low GI) to avoid big peaks and slumps in energy levels, you want a steady energy level throughout the day

- Choose **whole-grain** varieties of cereals, bread, biscuits etc, reduce white flour varieties.
- Rice – choose brown, basmati or doongara rice
- Use yellow box or manuka honey instead of sugar.
- Keep sugar foods to a minimum, but don't deprive yourself of foods you enjoy.

### Dairy, milk substitutes

- Choose **full-cream** varieties of dairy products.
- Try milk alternatives like almond, rice, hazelnut or coconut milk instead of soy milk (soy is high in Omega 6 oils as well as being highly processed).