

Healthy Meals on a Budget

Food for Thought

January 26, 2012

Why is nutrition important?

- The foods you eat provide the **energy** your body and mind need to function.
- The foods you eat **build and support** your immune system, hormones, nervous system and organs.

Growing minds need good food

“A new study suggests that diets high in fat, sugar and processed foods are lowering children's IQ. The report says that eating habits among three year olds shapes brain performance as they get older.

A predominantly processed-food diet at the age of three is directly associated with a lower IQ at the age of eight and a half, according to a Bristol-based study of thousands of British children.

Researchers said toddlers' diets could change IQ levels later in childhood, even if eating habits improve with age.”

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2011/feb/07/diet-children-iq>



Macronutrients vs. Micronutrients

- Macronutrients are made up of protein, fat and carbohydrates.
- Micronutrients are made up of vitamins and minerals.
 - You need both macronutrients and micronutrients for a healthy body and mind.

Micronutrients

- **Micronutrients are made up of vitamins and minerals.**
 - You only need these nutrients in small amounts (compared to macronutrients) but this does not mean you shouldn't prioritize them.
 - These substances enable the body to produce enzymes, hormones and other substances essential for growth, development and healing.
 - Individuals deficient in any one of the micronutrients can find themselves with major health consequences.
 - **Plants provide us with most of our micronutrients.**

Carbohydrates

- Carbohydrates provide your body with the fuel it needs for physical activity and proper organ function.
 - All carbohydrates are not created equal.
 - Carbohydrates are either complex or simple – you want complex.
- What's the difference?
 - Complex carbohydrates break down in your body slowly, releasing small doses of energy throughout the day.
 - Simple carbohydrates have been processed and their nutrition has been removed/reduced. They break down quickly and may spike your blood sugar (triggering more cravings).

Carbohydrates

- Eat more:
 - Vegetables, fruit, brown rice, whole grains, whole wheat pasta, legumes, and whole grain breads.
- Eat less:
 - White rice, white pasta, sugar, white bread.
- Why is this important:
 - Simple carbohydrates spike insulin. Insulin creates sugar. Unused sugar turns into fat.

Protein

- Protein is one of the most basic building blocks of the human body, making up 16% of our total body weight.
 - To calculate how many grams of protein you need daily:
 - **Multiply your weight (in pounds) by .36**
 - (ex: 140 lbs x .36 = 50.4 grams daily)
 - Be cautious of High-Protein/Low-Carb diets:
 - Excessive overconsumption of protein can increase amino acid oxidation (which can lead to kidney disease, calcium excretion and osteoporosis).
- Protein can be found in animal products, beans, nuts, and whole grains (even vegetables and fruit have protein).

Fats

- Fats often get a bad reputation but certain types of healthy fats are essential for a balanced diet.
 - What are healthy fats?
 - Healthy fats known as “essential fatty acids”
 - The two types of essential fatty acids are Omega-3 and Omega-6.
 - Where can I find these essential fatty acids?
 - Green leafy vegetables, avocados, flaxseeds, soybeans, nuts, seeds and certain fish (like salmon).

Fats (cont)

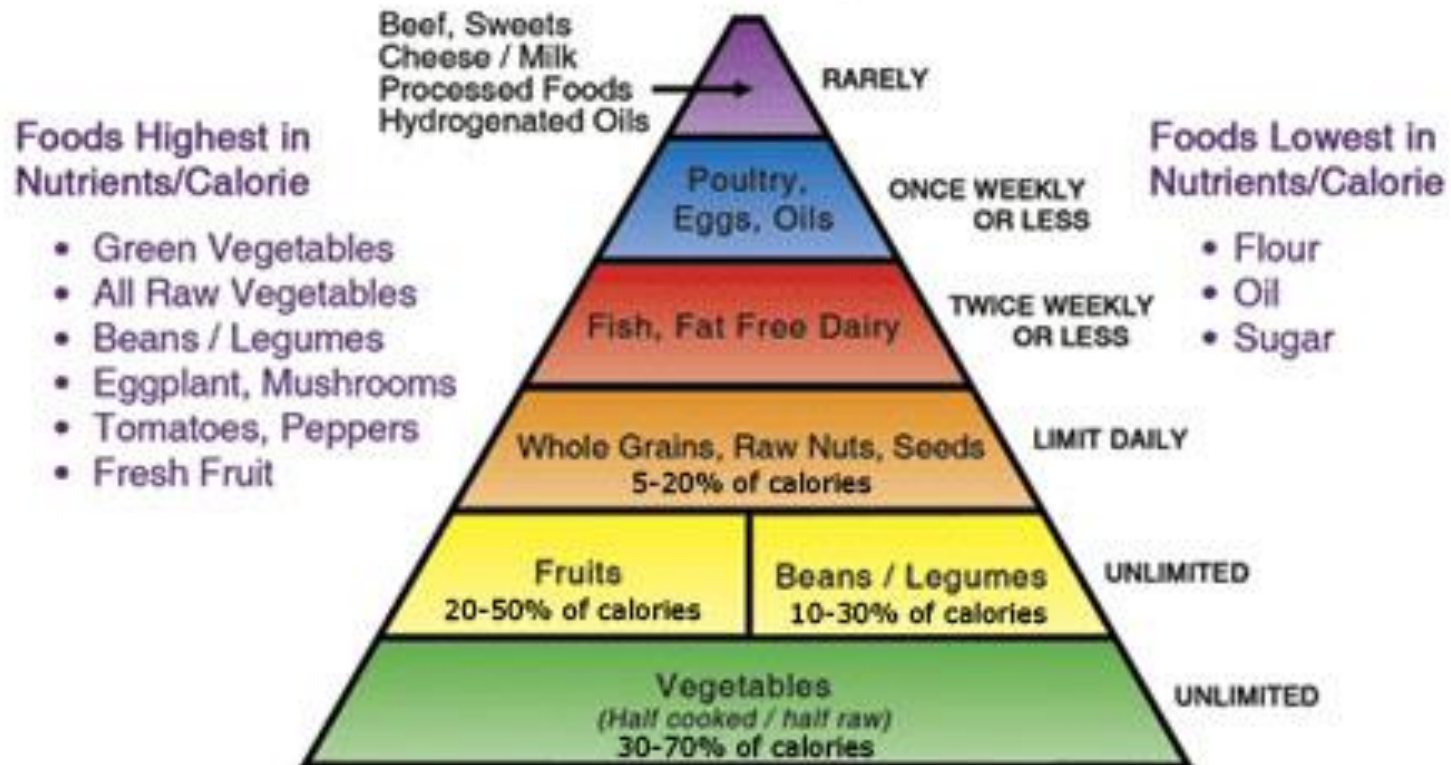
- What about olive oil? Is it healthy?
 - No processed oil is considered healthy but some oils are slightly less harmful to your body than others.
 - These oils are often derived from plant sources (but remember, these oils still contain saturated fat).
 - Fats from animal sources contain cholesterol and these should be avoided.
 - However, given the choice of butter or margarine – go with butter, it's REAL food.
 - Always choose a REAL food over one created in a lab.

Processed Foods

- This cannot be stressed enough: **AVOID** processed foods and foods created in laboratories.
 - The average American diet contains 60% processed food
- Processed foods contain a fraction of the nutrition that a whole food does.
 - Read food labels, does the product contain ingredients that you can't understand? Don't buy it.

EATING THE NUTRIENT DENSE WAY

JOEL FUHRMAN, M.D.



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Dr. Fuhrman explains nutrient density: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCRurW_AUAo

What about calories?

- Do calories matter?
 - **Yes**, in order for your body to lose 1lb of fat, it takes a 3500-calorie deficit. So if you do the math, this means you need to reduce about 500 calories a day to lose 1lb in a week.
 - **No**, the quality of calories consumed is extremely important. This is why a strict calorie counting approach does not work in the long term. It may have worked in your twenties, but over-time if you are not consuming sufficient nutrients, or feeding your body poor quality, processed, nutrient-deficient foods, your metabolism will eventually begin to slow down.

Eat food
Not too much
Mostly plants

- Michael Pollan (from Food Rules)