



A Healthy Lifestyle for Nutrition and Exercise

Modern life is great in many ways, but the advances and conveniences have brought health hazards with them.

Three of the modern life health hazards are our food choices, eating habits, and exercise habits. We need to be aware of these and adjust for them.

Here are our suggestions—but they are offered to you with a proviso. You all know as well as we do that when it comes to nutrition and exercise, the recommendations keep changing! First you hear low fat, and then you hear low carbs. First you hear exercise three times a week, then you hear five times a week. Even the hallowed “food pyramid” is under attack. What is a body to believe?

So, we have tried to provide common sense advice not likely to be subject to change.

Food Choices

Because of modern food processes, people are no longer in danger of starving, food is relatively inexpensive, and we hardly have to work at all to collect and prepare foods.

But modern food processing also concentrates calories, which makes it easy for us to get too much too fast. We can also get too much fat, too many carbohydrates, too much salt, and not enough fiber. How can we cope with these dangers?

- **Include healthy foods regularly in the family's diet.** Fresh fruits and vegetables generally fit this category. Protein foods are also good: meats, fish, dairy, and tofu.
- **Avoid foods that are heavy in fats and calories.** French fries, candies, etc.
- **Avoid foods that are heavy in sugar** (sugar is a carbohydrate that is absorbed very speedily into the bloodstream). Sodas and juices are full of sugar. Take it easy on pasta and breads; the carbs in these turn into sugar quickly. (Too much sugar brings out the body's insulin, a hormone that drives sugar into cells, which is turned into fat, and which makes us hungry again pretty quickly.)

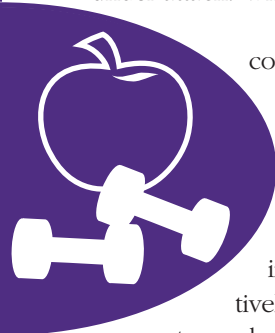
- **Favor healthier oils:** olive oil and vegetable oils are best, butter is okay in moderation. Avoid soft margarine, which has harmful components called trans-fats and partially-hydrogenated oils.
- **Include foods with fiber**—a lack of fiber leads to constipation (less than one bowel movement a day) and stomach aches. Bran cereals are good for fiber, as are fresh fruits and vegetables.
- **Buy very little junk food.** Remember, if you buy it, someone will eat it.
- **Avoid adding salt to your food.** Salt in the diet can make high blood pressure worse.

Food Habits

We learn our habits from a very young age, so the actions of parents are important here.

- **Let appetite be your guide.** A child should eat when hungry, and stop when pretty full—not stuffed to the gills!
- **Try to eat at fairly regular times, and try to have the family eat together.** It is best not to eat in front of the TV, and a good idea to be conscious of what you are eating while you eat it. This minimizes eating unconsciously, which can lead to overeating.
- **Most people adjust well to about three meals a day, and a couple of snacks** (with healthy food).
- **Try to make your meals pretty much the same size.** This is better than having one really big meal. When you do that, the body tends to hold on to more of the calories as fat.
- **Avoid food fights with kids**—no one wins these. If they won't eat, it's okay, they won't starve. If they demand junk food, you're okay if there is none in the house.
- **Eat until you are just full, not stuffed.** But don't deprive kids of food if they are hungry, even if it is off hours. Don't let yourself get too hungry; don't let yourself get too full.

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- *Avoid fast food restaurants*—maybe once a week at most. They offer too many carbs, too much fat, and too many calories. Fast food qualifies as a bad habit.

Exercise and Activity

People used to have no choice—they walked and carried a lot. Nowadays we sit and ride a lot. If we are to keep our bodies healthy, we need to build exercise into our lives consciously.

- *Set a good example.* Be conscious of your own exercise habits, and build them into your daily life. Kids learn from us. The family that exercises together stays healthy together.
- *Walk up one flight of stairs and down two flights,* instead of taking the elevator.
- *Limit TV time.* Not because TV is so harmful (that's disputable), but because we don't move at all when we watch TV—except maybe to reach over for a soda....
- *Encourage activities at home*—riding

bikes, running after each other, playing games. Telling kids that this is “good,” goes a long way.

- *Sign up for sports.* PE at school is not enough! Every child should have a couple of activities that they really like. Some will be team sports, some individual; some will be competitive, some not. But it is the very rare person who cannot find anything that they like to do physically.
- *Encourage aerobic exercise.* What is aerobic exercise? If you are huffing and puffing and your heart is racing as you do it, that's aerobic. They need to get the heart rate up to really benefit.
- *Scheduled activities keep you committed.* It is so easy to say, I'll do that treadmill later. But it is harder to avoid an appointment with teammates or friends.

These are all general guidelines that we hope you find helpful. We Bayside clinicians are here to help you personally, so don't hesitate to discuss all this with us at our visits. Good luck!