LIVING WELL & HEALTHY WEIGHT

If you’re feeling that you want to optimize your health and wellness routine, you’re not alone. Here are some great tips based on the latest nutrition research that will put you on the path to meeting your personal goals and help you feel your best in the process!

**Yes—eat breakfast.** A 2013 nutrition study with teenage girls compared skipping breakfast with eating a high-protein breakfast of 350 calories. Not only did the breakfast-eaters feel less hungry all day long—they snacked less at night. Blood tests showed their ghrelin (hunger hormone) levels were down. Other indicators of the body’s hunger response were down, too. Timing apparently does matter, so go ahead and eat breakfast. Opt for the protein over the refined carbs.

**Eat eggs in the morning.** It’s not just about the calories. It’s about hunger hormones, too. Nutrition research published in International Journal of Obesity (2008) shows that including eggs in your breakfast can help you feel full—and reduce your calorie intake for the whole day. Eating eggs at breakfast reduces ghrelin, so you feel satisfied and eat less as the day goes on. Researchers have also found that people eating three eggs at breakfast lose 65% more weight than those eating a high-carb breakfast. Good news: The egg-eaters also had a 34% drop in waist size and a 16% drop in body fat.

**Protein-power your snacks, too.** Just as protein at breakfast helps appetite control, researchers say the same is true with a high-protein afternoon snack. It doesn’t have to be meat; researchers recommend whey, soy, pea, or egg protein. A small handful of almonds per day (1.5 oz) can also help. Notes the Institute of Food Technologists, “Eggs are one of the densest proteins in the non-meat category.”

**Tune up your food choices.** Bringing your daily choices into balance can help whittle away extra calories, meal by meal—and keep you better nourished. For example, you can avoid high-calorie beverages, such as coffee drinks, alcohol, juice, or soda pop. You can limit the standard fast food fare and up your intake of wholesome vegetables and fruits. Even with calorie-for-calorie equality, a focus on nutrient-dense foods and sound nutrition may help you manage your weight, hypothesizes Dr. David Ludwig of Harvard Medical School and Dr. Mark Friedman of the Nutrition Science Initiative.

**Limit refined carbs,** such as sugars and white bread. The same two doctors suggest that in a typical American diet, both the amount of carbs and the fact that many of our carbs are highly refined contribute to body fat. Sugary breakfast cereals, processed snack foods, white rice, and other refined carbs may trigger the body to lay down more fat, they suggest. Then it becomes a vicious cycle. Say the doctors, “It’s a distribution problem: We have an abundance of calories, but they’re in the wrong place. As a result, the body needs to increase its intake. We get hungrier because we’re getting fatter.” (New York Times, May 16, 2014).
Tackle portion distortion. Restaurant portion sizes, food packaging, and even your dinnerware can contribute to a distortion of what we perceive as a normal, healthy portion of food, says the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Try smaller plates; read food nutrition labels, and take your time when you eat so you can enjoy satisfaction with smaller portions.

Stay active. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics reminds us that exercise is a powerful complement to a healthy eating plan for weight loss. While it’s typically not realistic to “burn off” all the calories you might hope to from week to week, a routine of 30 minutes every day for five days out of the week can add up to about 1,000 calories. (A pound of fat is 3500 calories.) Even by itself, exercise reduces health risks, and it makes us feel good! And for the long term, research shows that regular exercise is very effective for keeping weight off after you’ve lost it.

Celebrate every win. Every step you take towards wellness counts. A healthy lifestyle comes from every small step you take. Try one tip at a time, and be well!

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