

# Eating Right is Right for Everyone!



When we hear the phrase “eating right,” some of us immediately think of the extremes: extremely overweight people who need to drastically overhaul their dining habits, or thin-as-a-rail people who seem to spend all their time seeking out organic foods, growing their own vegetables, and eating tasteless dishes. The fact is, eating right is something that every person should be paying attention to, from the most out-of-shape couch potato to the marathon runner. The reason? Even if your poor eating habits aren’t resulting in obvious weight gain or illness right now, they are guaranteed to catch up with you in the long run.

If you’re interested in living as long as possible, there’s one key ingredient, and that is eating right. Your body is a machine built to run on certain kinds of fuel, and putting the wrong kind of fuel into it over the course of a lifetime causes it to run down more quickly. That means a shorter lifespan, and you only get one! Here are some tips on how you can work on extending your life— starting with your very next meal.

## Obstacles to Eating Right

It’s harder today than ever before to make good eating choices. For one thing, most of us have to expend far less energy than our great-grandparents did just to make it through each day. We drive to work or school; sit at a desk all day; and relax at home in the evening rather than working with our hands during the day and doing chores at home in the evening. This ease of life means that our body stores up extra fat, rather than burning it with normal activity.

To make matters worse, convenience works against the healthy eater. It’s easier to pop a frozen pizza into the microwave than to prepare a healthy meal with unprocessed foods. Planning for a longer life sometimes means that meals take some extra thought ahead of time. It may also include a financial investment. Raw produce and healthy meats are generally more expensive than unhealthy, processed foods, but worth the investment— especially when you consider the medical bills unhealthy eating habits will eventually lead to.



If you’re interested in living as long as possible, there’s one key ingredient, and that is eating right.

## LEARN MORE

Make smart decisions about your health and visit a physician or health specialist for advice and questions.

### USDA Nutrition Information

[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

### National Agriculture Library

[www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov)

### American Society for Nutrition

[www.nutrition.org](http://www.nutrition.org)

# EAT RIGHT, LIVE LONGER



## HEALTHY DIRECTIONS

©2023 Prevention & Treatment Resource Press  
877-329-0578  
[www.PTRpress.com](http://www.PTRpress.com) • product #PB-PH20  
This pamphlet may not be copied.

# HEALTHY DIRECTIONS



## The Fast Food Problem

It's incredibly easy to fall into the rut of grabbing a fast food meal in the middle of a busy day. It's easy; you don't even have to get out of the car; and it doesn't cost that much more than a homemade meal. But the trade-off is a very high dose of fat, sodium, cholesterol, and artificial ingredients that strains your body's systems.

By planning ahead you can steer clear of the fast food drive-through. Pack leftovers from a healthy dinner, make a sandwich the night before, or keep some groceries at work. If you are forced to stop for a meal, eat as little as possible, and avoid the worst menu items.

## Snack Smart

Sometimes it's not your three main meals that contribute the most to an unhealthy life—it's what you eat in between. Snacking is a kind of addiction for many people; they do it almost without realizing it, and they find it hard to concentrate if they don't have a snack at the usual time. Often, those snacks are unhealthy things like candy bars, soft drinks, and high-fat specialty coffee drinks. By altering those habits, you can make snack time an ally rather than an enemy. Snack on veggies like raw carrots, sweet peppers, and broccoli, and drink natural fruit juices instead of sugary drinks.

**The trade off of fast food is high doses of fat, sodium and cholesterol. Why not try something healthy instead?**

## Knowledge Is the First Step

The first step to eating right is getting the facts. When you're young, it feels like you can eat anything you want without suffering any consequences. But as you grow older, those bad eating habits will come back to bite you in the forms of these problems (among others):

### Diabetes

*Overconsumption of sugar over the course of years hurts the body's ability to process it. With diabetes, daily medical attention is necessary to keep the body's sugar levels in a safe balance.*

### Heart trouble

*Cholesterol deposits in the arteries make it harder for the heart to pump blood. Eventually, heart attacks, strokes, and cardiac arrest are dangerous probabilities as the heart simply can't keep up any longer.*

### Skeletal trouble

*Your bones and joints need vitamins and minerals to rebuild themselves. Without enough of this fuel, joints become weak and cause nearly constant pain. Bones become frail and brittle, vulnerable to breaking easily. Extra weight strains the skeleton, causing back pain.*

### Cognitive decline

*The brain is a muscle that needs nutrition. The worse your eating habits are, the sooner your brain will suffer from dementia and loss of function.*



## Smart Choices

Contrary to most people's impression, eating right is not a complicated, expensive, or time-intensive activity. Most of the time, people can begin to transform their eating habits with just a few relatively minor changes. An easy way to start is by deciding to make one smart choice at each meal. This might mean substituting an unhealthy side dish for vegetables, drinking water instead of a soft drink, or packing a lunch instead of eating fast food. Practice the same smart decision making at snack time, and you will have already made a huge difference in your nutrition intake for the day.

When choosing foods to eat, you should always read the food label before purchasing items at the store. No excuses at restaurants, either! Most restaurants have the information available online or on the menu.

When reading food labels, there are certain nutrients you want to limit and certain nutrients you want to be sure you get enough of.

**Limit these nutrients:** Fat, Cholesterol, Sodium, Carbohydrates, Protein

**Get more of these nutrients:** Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Calcium, Iron

**Have a vegetable or a piece of fruit for a healthy snack.**

## Feel Better Now

After eating better for just a short time, you will start to feel something incredible happen. You will feel stronger; it will be easier to get out of bed in the morning; and you will find yourself craving fruit and lean meats instead of cheap processed foods. That's the feeling of being healthy! Not only will you enjoy that great feeling now, but when you grow older, you will continue to enjoy a great quality of life.

Living a longer life means making smart choices today. Each time you pull a can of soda from the fridge, stop at the vending machine, or decide what to make for dinner, remember that you are planning for the long term. The "future you" will look back and thank you for doing the right thing!



## Tired of Super Size? Try Super Foods!

- Certain types of fish, such as salmon, trout, and mackerel contain healthy omega-3 fatty acids that help lower cholesterol, prevent heart attacks, and even reduce depression.
- Tomatoes contain lycopene and also help stimulate the immune system. Some studies have shown that lycopene may prevent the progression of certain degenerative diseases.
- Broccoli contains large amounts of vitamin C, calcium, and fiber. It can help prevent bone loss, reduce your risk of heart disease, and boost your immune system.
- Yogurt contains "friendly" bacteria, which helps maintain the intestines and keeps you regular. Yogurt is high in calcium and is believed to act as a natural appetite suppressant.