

Basic Dietary Guidelines

“Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.”
- Michael Pollan, Omnivore’s Dilemma

These suggestions are a basic guideline for an “ideal” diet. This is not meant to replace specific dietary additions and restrictions suggested to you.

1. The general idea.

The concepts provided in this handout create the structure for a whole foods diet. The general idea is to eat foods that are nearest their original, unprocessed, and freshest form. These foods provide a greater amount of nutrients, are easier to digest, have fewer tendencies to cause allergies and inflammation, and reduce the risk of just about every chronic disease. Eating healthy helps people to heal, and to stay well. This may sound obvious, but it’s often overlooked. It is an absolutely vital component of any treatment plan.

2. Eat organic, in-season, local, whole foods.

To find local food markets, grocery stores, and restaurants near you visit www.localharvest.org.

- Eating “whole” foods simply means that you are eating foods in their original form or close to it. Eating organic will reduce the potential toxicity of your food, and increase its nutritional value (organic vegetables have been shown to contain from 2-5x more nutrients than conventional vegetables)! Eating local and in season ensures freshness, and thus higher nutrient levels. It also supports your local economy and is better for the environment.
- Eating fresh, local, organic produce does not have to be expensive! Consider joining a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), shopping at Farmer’s markets, buying from the farmer directly, or planting a garden. You may be surprised how much *less* expensive whole foods are compared to foods that come in packages.
- Avoid all GMO foods (genetically modified). Most common GMO foods: corn and soy. *Be aware that it is not yet required in the U.S. to add to the label if a product contains GMO ingredients. Certain companies choose to label their foods as “GMO free” however. For more information, visit the Non-GMO Project at livingnon.gmo.org.
- Avoid processed foods (i.e. foods that are packaged, and foods that contain ingredients that you are unfamiliar with).

3. One-half to three-fourths of every meal should be vegetables.

The more colorful each meal the better. Include reds, yellows, oranges, purples, and greens (particularly dark greens) in your meals on a regular basis. Eat the rainbow! Vegetables are most nutritious when eaten raw or steamed. Steamed vegetables are often easier to digest, and some nutrients are more available after gentle cooking.

4. Eat protein from healthy sources.

Eat a healthy portion of protein with *every* meal. Healthy protein supports blood sugar balance and weight loss. Eating protein in the morning is particularly important for setting up a good blood sugar pattern for the day and maintaining balanced energy and appetite.

- Healthy animal proteins include a 3 to 4 oz portion of fresh cold-water fish, grass fed organic beef, lamb, pork, wild game, and/or chicken, eggs, etc.

- Great vegetarian/vegan sources include pastured eggs, raw nuts and seeds, beans and lentils. Nuts and legumes are best eaten soaked and/or sprouted for best nutrient bio-availability. Soy should be eaten in moderation if at all, and preferably in the fermented form (miso or tempeh). Raw organic grass fed dairy can be a good protein source if tolerated, especially if it's fermented (such as kefir or yogurt). Goat and sheep dairy are often less allergenic than cow dairy.
- Find a farmer in your area that raises animals humanely and on their traditional diets. Buying directly from the farmer is often cheaper and almost always better quality. Visit www.localharvest.org or our great local organization that connects consumers to farmers: <http://sustainableconnections.org/foodfarming>. The Bellingham Farmer's Market (Saturdays) is a great place to buy local, organic, grass fed meat.
- Avoid grain-fed meats. Grain fed meats have a poor essential fatty acid composition, thus tend to cause inflammation, whereas grass-fed meats tend to reduce inflammation in the body.
- Avoid deep fried, charred, and smoked meats because of their higher percentage of oxidized fats.
- Avoid nitrites, a common preservative in meats (sausages, bacon, and lunch meats mostly).

5. **Eat healthy fats.**

Contrary to popular belief, healthy fat does NOT make you fat. Certain fats are good, and this includes some saturated fat. Fats are essential for optimal brain, heart, lung, and eye function and healthy skin. Many healthy fats help to reduce inflammation in the body, which is very important in most chronic diseases.

- Use small amounts of organic cultured butter, ghee, avocado oil, or coconut oil for cooking. These oils have a higher smoke point so are less likely to oxidize when heated.
- Healthy sources of fat include: avocados, coconut milk/oil, avocado, hemp oil, olive oil, organic cultured butter, ghee, raw nuts and seeds, fish, pastured eggs, and animal meat (when the animal has been living on its traditional grass-fed diet). Raw organic grass fed dairy (preferably goat or sheep, and fermented as mentioned above) can also be a good fat source if tolerated.
- Avoid corn, soy, all vegetable oils (except olive and avocado), margarine, Crisco, and oils in a spray can because these oils are easily oxidized, which is damaging to blood vessels. They also contain omega 6 fatty acids, which can cause inflammation in the body.
- Avoid trans-fats. They are not a product found in nature and their long-term effects on the body are poorly understood.

6. **Eat carbohydrates in moderation.**

A good general rule for plate proportions is 2/3 veggies, 1/3 protein, keep the carb on the side or leave it out, add plenty of healthy fat. Protein and fat are satiating enough that a big heap of pasta, bread, or even whole grain are often unnecessary to feel full and satisfied after a meal.

- The healthiest forms of carbohydrates if you choose to eat them are yams and winter squashes. Whole grains follow suit after that. Whole grains contain fiber and protein so are much more nutritious than refined grains. Suggested grains include: wild rice, brown rice, buckwheat, steel cut oats, quinoa, teff, millet, and amaranth. Soaking and sprouting grains helps to improve nutrient bio-availability. Remember to keep grains and carbs minimized in your diet though, even the healthy ones.
- Avoid gluten containing grains: wheat, spelt, rye, barley, and kamut. These grains increase inflammation in the body for most people.
- Avoid processed grains (grains that have been made into flours, i.e. breads, pastas, tortillas, crackers, and cereals). Processing grains often removes the fiber and protein, thus reducing

their nutritional value. A processed grain is digested more like a sugar, which spikes blood sugar.

7. **Eat fruits in moderation** (no more than 2 pieces per day on average).

Fruits are loaded with antioxidants. Whole fruits contain fiber which makes them easier to digest, and easier on blood sugar. Eat the skins of most fruits, as this is where the fiber, and often more of the nutrients are. The reason to moderate fruits is that they are sugary, so best not to overdo.

8. **Add fermented food to your diet.**

1 time per day would be great. (Kombucha, kefir, fermented soy such as tempeh or miso, sauerkraut, kimchi). Fermented foods aid digestion and the immune system by restoring balance to your gut flora.

9. **Drink purified or mineral water.**

Approximately 60% of the body is made up of water. Adequate intake of water is essential for proper elimination of toxins that accumulate throughout the day. Minerals are good for bone, heart, and connective tissue health.

- Avoid soda, fruit juices, and ALL diet drinks because of the large amounts of sugar or artificial sweeteners. Fresh-juiced vegetable juices and herbal teas are good alternatives.
- Avoid chlorinated (unfiltered) tap water.
- Avoid pasteurized milk, low fat or skim milk, and unfermented dairy products. Most people have a hard time digesting dairy, and it causes inflammation for many people. If you do tolerate dairy, be sure that it is raw, and preferably fermented.
- Limit coffee intake, and drink it only in the morning. Coffee in excess weakens your bones and is hard on the digestive tract and nervous system. Green tea is a good alternative and has many health benefits.
- Limit alcohol intake to no more than 1 drink daily, and less is far better. Drink only pure high quality liquor, wine, and beer (preferably organic and sulfite free).
- Limit carbonated water. Carbonation is acidic and can harm teeth and mineral balance.

10. **Use natural sweeteners.**

Use stevia, maple syrup, and raw honey to sweeten foods, in moderation.

- Avoid high fructose corn syrup, refined sugar, and artificial sweeteners (aspartame, Equal, Splenda, etc.). Artificial sweeteners are toxic to the nervous system and poorly eliminated by the body. Xylitol is highly processed and is often made from corn, so is best avoided.

11. **Eat a variety of foods.**

Experiment often with new and unfamiliar foods. Vary your diet from day to day. Do not rely too much on one specific food for each meal. Eating too much of one food increases allergenic reactions. Eating a variety of foods ensures a good balance of many nutrients.

- Include as many spices and herbs as possible because they have many health benefits: turmeric, ginger, garlic, parsley, cilantro, basil, mint, etc.

12. **Recipe ideas:**

Cookbooks:

- The Whole Life Nutrition Cookbook, by Ali Segersten and Tom Malterre
- Nourishing Meals, by Ali Segersten and Tom Malterre
- Nourishing Traditions, by Sally Fallon

- The Whole 30 Cookbook, by Melissa Hartrig

Websites:

- www.thewhole30.com
- www.nourishingmeals.com
- www.epicurious.com
- www.nourishedkitchen.com

13. Nutrition Books for further reference:

- The Paleo Cure, by Chris Kresser
- The Abascal Way, by Kathy Abascal
- The Elimination Diet, by Tom Malterre