

## **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 anti-inflammatory 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](http://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.
- If eating entirely organic is not within your budget, consider consulting the Environmental Working Group’s “Dirty Dozen” and “Clean 15” lists to see which types of produce tend to contain more or less pesticide residue: [www.ewg.org/foodnews/](http://www.ewg.org/foodnews/).
- 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 [www.nongmoproject.org](http://www.nongmoproject.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, weight loss, and maintains lean body mass. 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 wild caught 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 only be eaten in moderation if tolerated, 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](http://www.localharvest.org), [www.eatwild.com](http://www.eatwild.com), 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 farmed fish. Eat wild caught fish in moderation, and particularly smaller fish (due to less potential for bioaccumulation of ocean toxicity).
- 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).
- Look for meats that have been raised without the use of antibiotics or growth hormone.

#### 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, hormonal, 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, nut/seed, and vegetable oils (except olive, coconut, 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 and beans/lentils follow suit after that. Whole grains contain fiber and protein so are much more nutritious than refined grains. Suggested grains include: wild rice, forbidden (black) 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. Berries are a great choice, as they are lower in sugar, and loaded with antioxidants.

## 8. **Add live culture/fermented, as well as prebiotic foods to your diet.**

Adding some type of fermented food and prebiotic food to the diet daily is great. Examples include kombucha, kefir, fermented soy such as tempeh or miso, sauerkraut, kimchi, and high quality non-pasteurized pickled vegetables. Fermented foods aid digestion and the immune system by restoring balance to your gut flora. Prebiotic foods help to feed our healthy gut flora; examples include garlic, onion, leek, Jerusalem artichoke, dandelion greens, apples, flax, jicama, and chicory.

## 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 organic, and preferably raw and 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, cider, beer, and wine (preferably organic and sulfite free).
- Limit carbonated water to one drink daily. Excess carbonation is acidic and can harm teeth and mineral balance. Mineral water is a good alternative.

#### 10. Use natural sweeteners.

Use stevia, maple syrup, coconut sugar, monk fruit, and raw honey to sweeten foods, in moderation.

- Avoid high fructose corn syrup, refined sugar, sugar alcohols such as xylitol, and artificial sweeteners (aspartame, Equal, Splenda, etc.). Artificial sweeteners are toxic to the nervous system and poorly eliminated by the body.

#### 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. Consider fasting.

Try to consume all of your calories within a 12 hour window each day. It is best to give the digestive tract a rest for 12 hours each night. There is a plethora of research that supports the benefits of fasting for better health and even potentially improved life span. For some people, an even longer fasting window may be indicated, but this is best discussed with your doctor on an individualized basis. It is also best to stop eating within 3 hours of bedtime to avoid weight gain and to help with sleep quality.

#### 13. Recipe ideas:

- [www.wholelifenuitration.net](http://www.wholelifenuitration.net)
- [whole30.com](http://whole30.com)
- [nourishedkitchen.com](http://nourishedkitchen.com)
- [www.thepaleomom.com](http://www.thepaleomom.com)
- [www.epicurious.com](http://www.epicurious.com)

#### 14. Nutrition Books for further reference:

- The Paleo Cure, by Chris Kresser
- The Abascal Way, by Kathy Abascal
- The Elimination Diet, by Tom Malterre
- The Whole 30 Guidebook, by Dallas and Melissa Hartwig
- The Hot Detox Plan, by Julie Daniluk
- Food, What the Heck Should I Eat?, by Mark Hyman