

## HEALTHY EATING RESOURCE PACKET

### Being a Healthy Eater

It's an individual decision to improve eating habits. The average diet is often unhealthy. Since the majority of people eat foods with too much fat, oil, salt or sugar, often we need to become an "abnormal" eater to be a healthy eater.

Improved eating habits will make you feel better and function better, both on and off the job. There are no instant foods or pills that can do this. You hold the power over what you ingest.

#### Strategies

Eat a variety of foods each day. This means fruits, vegetables, whole grain breads and cereals, fish, lean meats, low-fat dairy products, nuts, seeds, dry peas and beans. As a general rule of thumb, eat some protein, two pieces of fruit and a salad daily. Your salad should have a variety of mixed ingredients, such as carrots, celery, lettuce, bell pepper, onion, cabbage and beets. A tablespoon of dressing goes a long way if you toss the salad well.

#### What About Fat and Salt?

It's always a good idea to limit the amount of fat, saturated fat and cholesterol you eat. This includes the fat in meats, eggs, butter, cream and shortenings. Reduce your intake of salt, too. This can be done by cooking with smaller amounts of salt, avoiding salty snacks and using low-salt seasoning or herbs to flavor foods.

#### Satisfy Your Sweet Tooth

To become a healthy eater you must also avoid eating too much sugar. Reduce frequent snacks of candy and soft drinks. You can curb your sweet tooth cravings by eating natural sugars such as raisins, apples, bananas, pears, melons or other fruits. An occasional dessert won't hurt you.

#### The Golden Keys

The above practices are the golden keys to a balanced diet. Becoming a healthy eater will be easier when you eat foods your body truly needs and can use. Your body will reach a more even level of functioning once you replace empty calories with nutritious foods.

- Eat a variety of foods each day. Limit fat, saturated fat, salt and cholesterol.
- Eating a salad a day is a key strategy.
- Satisfy your sweet tooth with fresh fruit.

Source: Parlay International, 2005

Claremont distributes this information to provide employees with general behavioral health information. If you have concerns about these or other behavioral health issues, you can call Claremont to arrange for assistance. You will be directed to an appropriate, experienced professional who can offer guidance in a variety of work and personal matters.

For confidential help, call: 800-834-3773 or visit [www.claremonteap.com](http://www.claremonteap.com).

## Make the Supermarket a Health-Food Store

If you think the only place to buy healthy food is a health food store, think again.

In response to consumer demand, most supermarkets now carry products previously found only at health food stores. But many shoppers are unaware of these products because they're often displayed alongside similar items that are high in fat and food additives.

"If you take a close look, you'll find a wealth of natural foods available in every food category, and significant amounts in your market's cereal, soup, salad dressing, cookie and cracker sections," says Lisa Messinger, author of "Turn Your Supermarket Into a Health Food Store."

"Until a few years ago, supermarkets segregated so-called diet and health foods to a single aisle. More recently, health or natural food items have been mainstreamed throughout the stores," Ms. Messinger says. "The trick, of course, is to learn to tell the truly healthy foods from the overhyped ones."

### Becoming an Educated Consumer

An increasing number of Americans are shopping for healthy foods. "As important as regular exercise is to good health, we're also aware that we still need to get a grip on what we eat," Ms. Messinger says. Study after study has shown a good diet reduces the risk of cancer, heart disease and a host of other preventable health problems.

These guidelines can help you choose healthier foods at the supermarket:

- As often as possible, choose fresh, raw fruits and vegetables. Wash before serving.
- Processed or canned fruits and vegetables often contain added sugar, artificial colors and excess sodium.
- In general, the shorter the ingredient list, the healthier the food. A whole-grain, all-natural bread can contain as few as five ingredients. A brand-name wheat bread containing preservatives, additives and artificial ingredients can have as many as 18 ingredients.
- Choose products with ingredients you recognize as "real" foods (corn, wheat) instead of chemical compounds you can't pronounce.
- Keep in mind ingredients you may wish to avoid -- such as caffeine, sodium, refined sugar and high-fructose corn syrup -- and watch for them on food labels.
- Be aware of label hype. Just because a product label has a big, bold "fat-free" banner doesn't mean it's healthy -- it may be high in sodium and sugar. The only way to find out is to read the fine print.
- Read the nutritional information on the label. Quickly scan the (per serving) calorie, fat, cholesterol and sodium totals. Products that contain 30 percent or fewer calories from fat will have 3 grams of fat or less per 100 calories.

"Just by looking at ingredient listings, you'll find lots of products that are whole or natural foods," Ms. Messinger says. "You may also find lots of foods that are good replacements because, even though they may have sugar or some other additive, they are not filled with artificial ingredients or preservatives like other foods in the category."

Source: Health Ink & Vitality Communications, 2003

## Offbeat Ways to Eat Better, Exercise More

Eat fewer calories and get more physical activity. Health experts stress this is the golden rule in managing weight -- and it couldn't sound much simpler. So, why do Americans find this standard so hard to apply? Nearly two in three adults are overweight or obese, and the number keeps increasing. About 300,000 Americans die each year from weight-related illness, more than those killed by pneumonia, motor-vehicle crashes and airline crashes combined.

To improve your eating habits and work more exercise into your schedule, consider these offbeat tips from Weight Watchers.

### Get Moving:

- Get fidgety. Fidgety people burn more calories than calm people. Stand up and pace while on the phone, or swing one leg when you sit with legs crossed.
- Leave your work shoes in the office, and wear a pair of good, comfortable walking shoes on the street. Not only will you save wear and tear on your work shoes, but you'll also be able to walk more efficiently and with less risk of injury.
- Don't use bus or subway transfers. Walking to work often gets city-dwellers where they're going more quickly than taking a cab or bus. As soon as you get off the bus or train, walk as much of the way to work as you can.
- Involve your mind. When you take a long walk, use distraction to keep you moving. If you don't have a friend to walk with, use a personal stereo -- listen to a book on tape or music with a beat to it. Don't wear a stereo if you must stay alert to the sound of traffic.
- Close the door to your office. In privacy, you can pick up some free weights, use rubber bands, jump rope or do sit-ups. Some people even have personal trainers come to their offices. Or leave the door open and organize a lunchtime yoga class with co-workers.
- Tighten your abs while sitting. Do this often enough, and you'll increase your muscle tone and improve your posture.
- Go dancing. Consider taking a dance class before or after work.

### Eat Healthier:

- Eat as many non-starchy vegetables as you want. Stock up on baby carrots, tomatoes, cucumbers, celery, radishes, broccoli and cauliflower and munch away. With sensible snacks on hand, you'll steer away from the vending machine.
- Bring a low-fat sandwich or salad to work. That way you are in control of what you eat -- unlike when you purchase the cafeteria specials.
- Never go to a restaurant hungry. First drink a can of low-sodium V8 juice -- it's high in fiber and nutrients and fills you up. Or eat yogurt, fruit or some other sensible snack. Then you can savor the higher-fat restaurant food but be satisfied with just half a portion or an appetizer.
- Eat away from your desk. If you must snack, go to the break room. The same rule applies when you're watching television -- snack only in the dining room or kitchen, not in front of the tube.

Source: Health Ink & Vitality, 2003