

A Guide for making healthier choices

The Back-To-Basics Healthy Eating Guide™

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to The Back-To-Basics Healthy Eating Guide™. In this book, you will learn various strategies and tools that you can use to make healthier choices for a better lifestyle. By establishing healthy lifestyle habits at this point in your life, you are making a very worthwhile investment in your future. You will be working at establishing a foundation for your health, which is the greatest gift anyone could have. With good health, you can do just about anything you want. You can truly live your life to its fullest potential.

What are we really talking about here? After all, being healthy and well isn't something that just happens; it takes effort and commitment to choose health and make healthy habits a priority. The main message here has to do with RISK. If you look at the causes of the most common diseases that people suffer from – (for example, cancer and heart disease, which are two of the main causes of death for people in North America) – you will see that these diseases have something in common. They both have risk factors. Risk factors are habits or behaviors that are present in a person's life that may increase the chance that they will develop a health problem. For example, most people know that if you smoke, you are more likely to suffer a heart attack compared to somebody who doesn't smoke. In this way, smoking is said to be a risk factor for heart disease.

The main risk factors for heart disease are:

- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- Lack of exercise and physical activity
- Poor eating habits
- High stress
- High blood cholesterol
- Hereditary factors or genetics (For example, if a close relative had heart disease, you are also at greater risk.)

Now, the important thing to notice about this list is that those risk factors fall into two main categories –

- 1) Factors that you have control over – these are things that have to do with your lifestyle.
They include things like smoking, exercise and physical activity, what you eat and how you handle the stress in your life.
- 2) Factors you don't have control over – these factors have to do mostly with genetics.

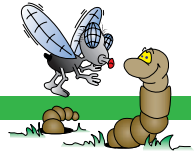
You will notice that you have direct control over most of the risk factors of heart disease.

- You can make a choice to live smoke-free.
- You can make a choice to exercise and be physically active on a regular basis.
- You can learn how to deal with the stress in your life more effectively and develop a healthier mental outlook on life.
- You can also learn healthier eating habits and make better choices in the foods you eat.

Together, these four areas form what is called your Health Foundation™. This is one of the basic concepts of this entire book.

The Back-To-Basics Healthy Eating Guide™ focuses specifically on helping you learn how to make healthier choices when it comes to the foods you eat.

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What's in it for you, you ask? The benefits of healthy eating are definitely worth it:

- More energy
- Helping to prevent lifestyle related diseases like heart disease, cancer and osteoporosis.
- Helping your body fight off colds and flu.
- Helping you concentrate and focus better during school and other activities.
- Helping you achieve and maintain a body weight that is right for you, both now and as you get older.
- Helping you learn healthy eating habits that you will carry with you for the rest of your life.

And many, many more....

The two main sections of The Back-To-Basics Healthy Eating Guide™ are:

1) Foundation Strategies™ - These are the basic, “absolute need-to-know” principles that form the core, or foundation, for healthy eating. If you do nothing else, at least read these 7 Strategies. They are:

- Choose Calcium Everyday
- Mom was right - Eat your fruits and vegetables
- Be a Grain Gourmet
- Be a Protein “Pro”
- Be Physically Active Every Day
- Choose Healthy Snacks
- Eat Breakfast Everyday

2) Secondary Strategies™ - These strategies add to your knowledge of eating healthier. Although not as important as the Foundation Strategies™, they are definitely worth checking out. The 6 Secondary Strategies are:

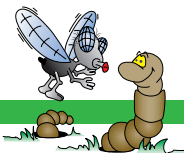
- Fat – You Can't Live With It, and You Can't Live Without It
- Sugar – Beware of Empty Calories
- Diets Don't Work (with a special section on Eating Disorders)
- Be Choosy When You Go Out
- Watch How You Watch TV - “Tune in, but not Out”
- Vegetarianism - There's more to it than “meats” the Eye

One of the keys to eating healthier involves eating a variety of foods from all food groups in a balanced way so that you can provide your body with all of the essential nutrients it needs. Nutrients are compounds found in your food that your body needs in order to be healthy and well. The body needs 6 main types of nutrients each day - carbohydrates, fats, protein, water, vitamins, and minerals. These nutrients are used for different purposes or functions in your body - from providing energy to keeping your bones strong to keeping your muscles, skin, hair and nails healthy to helping your eyes see well. The majority of your nutrients come from the 4 main food groups. These groups are:

- Grains, Breads, and Cereals
- Fruits and Vegetables
- Milk / Milk products / Milk alternatives
- Meat / Meat alternatives

Each day, you need to eat a balanced variety of foods from each of these food groups to help provide your body with all of the essential nutrients it needs.

Of course, there are many “other” foods you eat that don't exactly fall into any of the 4 basic food groups shown above - things like ketchup, potato chips, candy bars, mayonnaise, soda pop, and chocolate chip cookies to name a few examples. Besides eating a balanced variety of foods from each of the basic food groups, you need to eat these “other” foods in a balanced way as well. Many of these “other” foods taste great and are fun to eat. However, most of them don't really provide much in the way of nutrients that your body can use to be healthy (these types of foods are sometimes called empty-calorie foods). Some of these foods might be high on your list of favorites but they are



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usually low on nutrition. All foods – even less healthy choices, can be part of healthy eating. Problems can often occur when people eat too many of the low-nutrition foods and not enough of the high-nutrition foods from the basic food groups. The main point is that these empty calorie types of foods should be eaten “in moderation.” This means eating them only in small to moderate amounts (for example, maybe once a week), rather than on a daily basis. They should not be eaten in place of foods from the 4 basic food groups. Enjoying less healthy foods every now and again is a lot of fun, and it is part of eating normally. However, the basic food groups - which are explained more in the Foundation Strategies™, should form the foundation of your daily eating.

Like a lot of things in life, all of this is usually easier said than done!! At this time in your life, you are experiencing a tremendous amount of change - physically, mentally, and emotionally. Not only will your body probably go through some changes (if it hasn't already), there are usually changes in how you think, act and feel. All young people go through these changes in their own way. This is actually a great time in your life (even though there will be days when you may not feel that way exactly!) It can also be stressful and difficult at times. But you will handle it - everyone seems to muddle through it in his or her own way. There are a lot of ups and downs and twists and turns. Much the same thing can be said about your eating habits. At this time in your life, your normal eating habits are anything but normal. They can be very much up and down; kind of like a roller coaster ride. There can be missed meals, junk-food snacks, and fast food feasts; not to mention dieting and peer pressure. It's entirely normal for a young person's eating habits to be erratic or irregular. However, even though it's normal, there are some problems because this style of eating can result in some bad habits. Sometimes, these bad habits can lead to decreased energy, stamina or “get-up-and-go,” not to mention that your normal growth and development can be affected in some cases. Among other problems, it can also lead to poor immunity, which can result in decreased resistance of your body to colds, flu, or other infections or diseases as well as unhealthy weight gain and obesity in some people.

The idea here isn't to stress you out. But remember to take care of yourself and make having a healthy lifestyle a priority. There is a remarkable person inside of you that wants to live life to its fullest. The process of creating new, healthier eating habits will only help you to get the most out of life. So, if you're ready, turn the page!