



TakeCharge

WELCOA'S SELF-CARE BULLETIN



QUICK NUTRITIONAL TIPS *for You and Your Family*

We make dozens of decisions every day. When it comes to deciding what to eat and feed our families, it can be a lot easier than you might think to make smart, healthy choices. It takes just a little planning.

The food we put into our bodies is our fuel. It provides us with nutrients—the vitamins, minerals, and other compounds our bodies need to function and thrive. Research shows that good food choices are especially important for children's growing bodies and minds. Smart choices have both immediate and long-lasting benefits for you and your family.

“My best advice is for parents to be good role models by eating healthy and being physically active with

their children,” says Janet de Jesus, a nutritionist at NIH. “Keep healthy foods around the house for meals and snacks. If you save desserts and treats for special occasions, it will be more special. Involve children in the meal planning and cooking, and they will be more likely to eat the meals.”

Try the GO, SLOW, WHOA approach to food. GO foods are great to eat anytime. They have lots of nutrients and are low in unhealthy fats, sugar, and calories. GO foods include fruits; vegetables; whole-grain cereals, breads, and pastas; fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese; fat-trimmed and lean meats; fish; beans; and water. SLOW foods should be eaten less often. These include non-whole-grain bread, rice, and pasta; peanut butter; granola; pretzels; and

fruit juices. WHOA foods are only for once in a while—foods like french fries, doughnuts, whole milk, full-fat cheese, hot dogs, fried fish and chicken, candy, and soda.

HEALTHY STRATEGIES ON THE GO

Unfortunately, these days much of our food isn't eaten at home. It's eaten on the go. One easy way to eat more nutritiously is to pack healthy lunches—both for yourself and your kids.

“You can work with your child to make a lunch using whole-grain bread, wraps, or pita pockets filled with lean meats or cheese, vegetables, and nut butters or spreads, such as hummus,” de Jesus says. “Pack

vegetables such as carrots, snap peas and cucumbers, or any fresh fruit that's currently in season. Teens can learn to pack their own lunches with a healthy variety of foods."

When you're grocery shopping, the Nutrition Facts label is a great resource to help you compare foods. It can help you confirm whether products marked with healthy-sounding terms really are healthy. For example, "low-fat" foods aren't necessarily healthy; they can be very high in sugar and calories.

Use the Nutrition Facts label to help guide you to limit the nutrients you want to cut back on, such as sodium and unhealthy saturated fat. You can also use it to make sure you're getting plenty of the nutrients you need, such as calcium and iron.

When reading the label, start at the top. Look at the serving size. Next, look at the calorie count. Then move on to the nutrients, where it lists the amount and daily values experts recommend.



Remember that what you might eat as one portion can be multiple servings. For example, if you eat one bag of chips but the label says there are 3 servings in a bag, you need to multiply all the numbers on the label by 3 to find out how many calories you just ate.

Sometimes it can be hard to find healthy food choices when shopping locally. People in some communities have been working together to make it easier to find healthy foods in their neighborhoods.

Take time to build healthy eating decisions into every aspect of your family's life. If you're a parent or guardian, start talking with kids at an early age about health and nutrition. And practice what you preach. Make healthy food choices yourself so you can set a good example for your kids.

tips

- » Choose foods that are steamed, broiled, baked, roasted, poached, or lightly sautéed or stir-fried.
- » Ask for fat-free or low-fat milk instead of cream for coffee or tea.
- » Pick food without butter, gravy, or sauces—or ask to have the food without it.
- » Choose a low-calorie salad dressing.
- » Ask for salad dressing on the side, and use only some of it.
- » Pick drinks without added sugar, such as water, fat-free or low-fat milk, unsweetened tea, or diet iced tea, lemonade, or soda.
- » Trim visible fat from poultry or meat.
- » Don't eat the skin on cooked chicken or turkey.
- » Share your meal, or take half home for later.
- » Skip dessert or order fruit. Or share dessert with a friend.