The Importance of a Healthy Nutritional Diet

[Nutrition]

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1 WHY IS A HEALTHY NUTRITIONAL DIET IMPORTANT?

Most people are aware that good nutrition and physical activity helps to maintain a healthy life. In fact, good nutrition can help in the following ways:

- Reduce the risk of diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke, osteoporosis and some cancers
- Reduce high blood pressure
- Lower high cholesterol
- Increase energy
- Improve the immune system
- Improve overall well-being

Eating a proper daily, nutritious diet rich in plant-based foods (i.e. fruits and vegetable), fiber, water and whole grains offers numerous benefits that keep one mentally and physically well. Eating food low in fats, cholesterol and sodium can lower the risk of heart disease. It is best to avoid foods high in saturated and trans fats commonly found in red meats, fried foods, palm oils, margarines and packaged processed foods and snacks. The goal is to eat at least four to five servings per day.

In addition, a diet rich in calcium, vitamin D and other minerals and vitamins (i.e. A, C, & E) helps to strengthen your teeth and prevents bone loss associated with osteoporosis. Dark green leafy vegetables, such as kale, spinach, broccoli, and bok choy are also great sources of calcium. Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium and recommended by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to be taken daily for average adults ages 19-50.

By eliminating foods rich in excess fats, refined sugars and refined carbohydrates will help prevent blood sugar fluctuations and increase energy levels. Some examples of refined carbohydrates include candy and white breads.

Furthermore, proper nutrition increases blood flow to your brain, protect brain cells and help to prevent Alzheimer's disease. It is critical to eat baked, steamed and grilled foods to improve brain health and functionality. Foods such as prunes, blueberries, raspberries, cherries, almonds, walnuts, fruits and vegetables are a great source of vitamin E, which are all useful in fighting Alzheimer's disease.

Not only will a healthy diet improve brain function, but also overall body health. There have been several reports of the increase gut issues facing many Americans. A healthy digestive and colon is very important to general health. The colon is full of naturally occurring bacteria, which play a critical role in metabolism and digestion. Certain strains of bacteria also produce vitamins K and B, which benefit the health of the colon greatly. On top, these strains help to fight harmful bacteria and viruses. A diet low in

fiber and high in sugar and fat alters the gut microbione, and increases inflammation. However, a diet rich in vegetable, fruits, legumes, and whole grains provides a combination of prebiotics and probiotics that help good bacteria to thrive in the colon. Fermented foods, such as yogurt, kimchi, sauerkraut, and miso, are rich in probiotics.

2 WHAT IS A HEALTHY NUTRITIONAL DIET?

Good nutrition simply means eating foods that provide your body with all the nutrients, vitamins, and minerals it needs to work its best. Make sure your meals and snacks include nutrient-dense foods that are also low in calories. This included eating plenty of fruit to get the best benefit of the natural fiber, eating plenty of variety colorful vegetables daily and eating whole grains.

If you are eating any type of meats, it is best to eat lean cuts and poultry because these types they have less fat and fewer calories. However, remember that there are other sources of protein other than meats and poultry. You can try fish, beans, tofu, nuts, broccoli, yellow sweet corn, peas, Brussels sprouts and asparagus to name a few. Eating a healthy diet plays an essential role in maintaining a healthy weight, which is an important role of one's overall health. Being overweight or obese can lead to unhealthy life conditions such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers.

3 WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DO NOT EAT HEALTHY?

Emerging evidence has linked a close correlation between diet and mood. If you do not eat a nutrient induced food source, your body will soon respond in negative potentially harmful ways. The body may perceive that food is scare, and will start to initiate changes to lower your needed caloric intake. The body will start to slow down your metabolism and you could start to feel tired. According to figures published in 2017, evidence shows that as many as 92.1 million Americans have at least one type of cardiovascular disease. These diseases primarily involve the heart or blood vessels. Research indicates that 80 percent of premature heart disease and strokes can be prevented by making changes to your lifestyle, such as increasing physical activity and eating healthier foods. Broccoli, shown in Figures 1 and 2, is an excellent green vegetable that boost the immune system. If you want to live a long healthy life, then you need to remember Health is Wealth!

Figure 1: An illustration of Raw Broccoli

Figure 2: An illustration of Broccoli used in Soup