

Bonus Article: What should be on your plate?



A healthy diet involves balance. We need to get enough protein, grains, starches, and calcium-rich foods, as well as fruits and vegetables.

Without balance you could find that you're lacking enough fiber, as well as essential minerals and vitamins. When your diet lacks these nutrients, you may suffer from mood swings, not feel satisfied after meals, have higher stress levels, and feel fatigued. Dull skin, poor vision, and trouble with weight management could also be issues.

For optimal nutrition, your daily diet should include:

Vegetables: 3 cups daily

Try: Dark leafy greens, artichokes, snap peas, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, vegetable juices

To add variety: Experiment with a variety of veggies, plus herbs and spices, to add flavor and excitement.

Fruits: 2 cups daily

Try: Avocados, dates, pineapples, bananas, mangoes, berries, apples

To add variety: Explore frozen, canned, and dried fruits with no added sugars to accompany your favorite meals.

Protein: 6.5 ounces daily

Try: Lean meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, nut butter, beans, lentils, tofu

To add variety: Use different baking and grilling techniques.

Dairy: 3 cups daily

Try: Milk, yogurt, hard cheeses

To add variety: Find creative ways to turn healthy dairy options into dessert alternatives and healthy snacks.

Starches/Grains: 1 cup daily

Try: Bread, rice, pasta, cereal

Remember to: Manage portion size for weight control. When it comes to comfort foods, eat them less often or in smaller amounts, for good balance.