



Lesson 2

Eating for Health

What if you knew that 10 years from now you would be diagnosed with heart disease, type 2 diabetes, or cancer? What if the doctor told you this diagnosis was a direct result of poor health habits developed earlier in life? Armed with this knowledge, what aspects of your current lifestyle would you be willing to change? You can't see into the future, but there are steps you can take to decrease your risk of these kinds of health problems.



Your health: A powerful motivator

Your health can be a powerful motivator. Studies show that the average person is much more likely to commit to a healthy lifestyle when he or she is focused on achieving more than just looking good. You must find inspiration within yourself to make the commitment. What motivates you?

My internal motivator

Record your food intake and activity level for three days, if you have not already done so. You may notice a pattern in your lifestyle and eating habits, and perhaps you may even identify key changes you want to make. Now you have your source of motivation. A little help is all you need to get started.

What do all these words mean?

You don't have to be a scientist to practice good nutrition or be physically active, so don't let unfamiliar words scare you. A **nutrient** provides your body with the tools needed for growth, maintenance, and repair. Your body is already made up of nutrients, but you must still obtain more from your diet in order for it to work efficiently.

The six types of nutrients

Carbohydrates . . .

are misunderstood. They are your body's main energy source and in fact, the majority of your daily caloric intake (45 percent to 65 percent) needs to come from carbohydrates. So much for low-carb diets! Healthy carbohydrates can be found in whole grain products, fruits, vegetables, and legumes (dry beans, peas, etc.). Sugar is a carbohydrate too, but it is important to keep an eye on your intake of products containing added sugar such as candy, sugar-sweetened drinks, or pastries. These products are high in calories and low in vitamins, minerals, or fiber.

Fats . . .

also supply energy. They supply more calories per gram than either carbohydrates or protein, so keep your intake between 20 percent to 35 percent of your total calories. Not all fats are created

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equal. Unsaturated fats are heart-healthy and should be chosen over saturated and trans fats. Nuts, fish, and olive oil all contain unsaturated fat.

Protein . . .

is the final nutrient that provides your body with the energy it needs. Good sources include eggs, beans, nuts, dairy products, and lean meats such as pork tenderloin, poultry, and seafood. The remainder of your caloric intake should come from protein. The average person consumes enough protein daily. Even athletes do not need additional protein supplements.

Vitamins . . .

do not provide calories. Their job is to regulate body processes. Some vitamins (A, D, E, and K) require the presence of fat to yield benefits. This means they will not be readily absorbed without including some healthy fat in your diet. As you can see, fat-free is not always the way to go. On the other hand, vitamins B and C are water-soluble and not dependent on the presence of fat.

Minerals . . .

are often confused with vitamins. They regulate body processes and give your body structure. For example, bones are made of calcium and phosphorous. Minerals such as sodium and potassium regulate body fluids and help control blood pressure. That's why it's important to consume a high-potassium, low-sodium diet.

Water consumption . . .

is often overlooked, yet it is vital to the proper functioning of the body. If you consider the human body is made of 45 percent to 75 percent water, you can understand how important it is to drink enough water. Typically, eight glasses a day is recommended.

Describe your physical activity level

Heart rate should decrease as your fitness level increases. To calculate heart rate, find your pulse and count the number of beats in 15 seconds. Multiply this number by four. Determine your maximum heart rate by subtracting your age from the number 220. You should never exceed this limit. Aim to be within 60 percent to 80 percent of your maximum heart rate during physical activity. This is called your target heart rate.

Example: At rest, a 20-year-old counts 15 beats in 15 seconds.

$$\text{Heart rate} = 15 \text{ beats} \times 4 = 60$$

$$\text{Maximum heart rate} = 220 - 20 \text{ years} = 200$$

$$\text{Target heart rate during activity} = .60 \times 200 = 120$$

$$.80 \times 200 = 160$$

This individual's heart rate should stay within a range of 120 to 160 beats per minute during and immediately following physical activity.

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Now, calculate your own heart rate.

$$\text{Heart rate} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ beats} \times 4 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$\text{Maximum heart rate} = 220 - \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ years} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$\text{Target heart rate} = .60 \times \underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$.80 \times \underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

During physical activity, my heart rate should stay in this range:

- Intensity is defined as how hard you are working. Keep in mind that a longer time (1 hour) spent participating in light activity can provide the same benefits as a shorter time (20 to 30 minutes) spent engaging in vigorous activity. Essentially, the minimum amount of physical activity needed for health benefits is enough to burn 150 calories per day.
 - Light-intensity activities include walking slowly, gardening, stretching, vacuuming, raking leaves, etc.
 - Moderate-intensity activities include walking briskly, recreational swimming, bicycling, weight-lifting, shoveling snow, etc.
 - Vigorous-intensity activities include push-mowing the lawn, running quickly, moving furniture, circuit training, tennis, etc.

Next step

Create an action plan for this week that incorporates a variety of nutrients into your diet and includes activities of different intensities.

My Move Into Health action plan

Blank area for writing the action plan.

Knowledge for Life



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