

## **10 Steps to a Healthy Living**

The three keys to a healthy living are eating the right food, being active and having regular medical check ups. A healthy balanced diet contains a variety of types of food, including lots of fruit, vegetables and starchy foods such as wholemeal bread and wholegrain cereals; some protein-rich foods such as meat, fish, eggs and lentils; and some dairy foods.

Physical activity is a good way of using up extra calories that helps control your weight. People who exercise regularly have a much lower risk of premature death through heart attack. This is because exercise helps to increase good cholesterol, regulate blood pressure and improve circulation. Similarly if you are above 40, you are at risk of developing diabetes, high blood pressure and heart attack. Therefore you need to have regular health check ups and treat these problems as soon as they develop. Early detection and good control of these diseases help you lead a normal life.

Here are 10 tips for healthy living.

### **1. Choose healthy snacks**

Choosing wrong snack is the most common reason why people put on weight. Being overweight is a major cause of diabetes and other health problems.

Here are examples of some common snacks with high calorie.

<b>100 gm serving of</b>	<b>Kcal</b>
Bombay Mix	500
Vegetable Samosa	252
Walkers Crisps	525
Kelloggs Special Bar	391
KitKat	507
Chocolate cake	370
Digestive biscuit	495
Pistachio nuts	557

Why don't you choose healthy alternatives? Adding a bit of chilli and lemon juice can make it tastier if you like spicy foods.

<b>100 gm serving of</b>	<b>Kcal</b>
Celery	14
Tomato	18
Cucumber	12
Carrot	40
Red Pepper	26
Apple	56
Banana	153
Water melon	16

## **2. Know your calorie requirement**

The amount of calories you need depends upon your age, sex, height, body weight and activity level. This can be calculated for you today. An average man needs between 2000 – 2500 Kcal and a woman needs 1500 – 2000 Kcal every day. Anything more will accumulate as fat and anything less will lead to weight loss. If you eat one extra samosa everyday, you will put on about 11kg additional weight in one year. Similarly if you stop eating a 25 gm packet of crisp daily for one year you will lose about 6 kg in weight.

## **3. Do not skip meals**

Eating small, regular meals will keep your metabolism going faster than larger, less frequent meals. Having regular meals is important to lose weight as more energy is used to digest several small meals than to digest those same foods eaten all at once. Missing meals doesn't help you lose weight and it isn't good, because you can miss out on essential nutrients.

Research shows that eating breakfast can actually help people control their weight. This is probably because when you don't have breakfast you are more likely to get hungry before lunch and snack on foods that are high in fat and sugar, such as biscuits, doughnuts or pastries.

So why not go for a bowl of wholegrain cereal with some fruits and a glass of fruit juice for a healthy start to the day?

## **4. Know your fats**

The major kinds of fats in the foods we eat are dietary cholesterol, saturated, unsaturated, and trans fatty acids. Dietary cholesterol, saturated fats and trans fats raise blood cholesterol, but unsaturated fats lower cholesterol in the blood. A high level of cholesterol is a major risk factor for coronary heart disease, which leads to heart attack, and also increases the risk of stroke.

Dietary cholesterol is usually found in foods from animals such as meats, egg yolks, dairy products, organ meats (heart, etc.), fish and poultry. Saturated fatty acids have all the hydrogen the carbon atoms can hold and are found in animal sources like whole milk, cream, ice cream, whole-milk cheeses, butter, lard and meats and plant source such as palm, palm kernel, coconut oils and cocoa butter. Saturated fats are usually solid at room temperature. Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids are two types of unsaturated fatty acids. They're often found in liquid oils of vegetable origin. Polyunsaturated oils are liquid at room temperature and in the refrigerator. They easily combine with oxygen in the air to become rancid. Common sources of polyunsaturated

fats are safflower, sesame, soy, corn and sunflower-seed oils, nuts and seeds. Monounsaturated oils are liquid at room temperature but start to solidify at refrigerator temperatures. They are found in olive, canola and peanut oils and avocados. Polyunsaturated oils are better at lowering cholesterol.

During food processing, fats may undergo a chemical process called hydrogenation. This is also done to produce 'Vanaspati Ghee' which is widely used in Indian cooking. The process changes a liquid oil, naturally high in unsaturated fatty acids, to a more solid, more saturated and more unhealthy form. The greater the degree of hydrogenation, the more saturated the fat becomes. Many commercial products contain hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. Trans fats result from adding hydrogen to vegetable oils and recent studies suggest that these fats may raise blood cholesterol. Therefore, it is much healthier to cook with vegetable oil rather than 'Vanaspati Ghee'.

Omega-3 (along with omega-6) belongs to a family of fats called essential fatty acids and these two fatty acids are pivotal in preventing heart disease, cancer, and many other diseases. These two types of fat, omega-3 and omega-6, are both essential for human health. The ideal ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fats is 1:1 however the average intake of omega-6 to omega-3 ratio is 20:1. The primary sources of omega-6 are corn, soy, canola, safflower and sunflower oil and are overabundant in the typical diet, which explains excess omega-6 levels. By far, the best type of omega-3 fats are those found in fish. Recently there has been a trend to fortify various foods like eggs, cereal, fruit juices with omega-3 fats, however their role in preventing various disease has not been established yet.

All fats, whether they are good or bad, have a very high calorie content and if you want to lose weight, their intake should be limited. Here are few tips to cut down fat:

- Choose lean cuts of meat and trim off any visible fat.
- When you're choosing a ready meal or buying another food product, compare the labels so you can pick those with less total fat or less saturated fat.
- Measure oil for cooking with tablespoons rather than pouring it straight from a container.
- When you're making sandwiches, try to use a reduced-fat spread and spread it thinly.
- Choose lower fat versions of dairy foods like semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, reduced fat yoghurt, lower fat cheeses.
- Use low fat yoghurt in your cooking. This will reduce the need of oil or cream in the recipe.

### **5. Every little exercise helps**

Becoming active benefits your health and helps you lose weight. Moderate exercise for half an hour 5 times a week can bring enormous health benefits like preventing diabetes. At any age, increasing your daily activity, even by a small amount, can make a huge difference. Here are various ways you can be active

### *Enjoy Walking*

Make an effort to walk throughout the day. Get off the bus or train a stop or two before your destination and walk the rest of the way; park your car in the furthest space in the car park; walk up and down stairs (no lifts); walk the children to school; walk to the local corner shop for your newspaper or milk, etc. If you can, spend a few minutes of your lunch break taking a stroll around.

*15 min brisk walking daily will burn 60 extra kcal (lose 3kg in one year)*

### *Avoid the Lift & Escalator*

Take the stairs instead of a lift or escalator at your work or the mall. Just start with one flight. Soon, you'll be ready for two. If you can, start climbing up stairs as fast as you can.

*5 min brisk climbing daily will burn 40 extra kcal (lose 2kg in one year)*

### *Clean your House*

Keep your house clean and tidy with the help of exercise. Turn on the music and clean the windows, Hoover, dust and wash up at a brisk pace, and burn off those calories. Turn those tiresome chores into healthy positive ones! Try changing position of your furniture to give your house a new look.

*15 min hoovering / dusting/ cleaning daily will burn 40 extra kcal (lose 2kg in one year)*

### *Get Out In the Garden*

It is the time to enjoy gardening. Mowing the lawn, pulling weeds and raking leaves are chores that can be done by yourself as a chance to exercise. Show your garden with pride and enjoy exercise.

*90 min gardening every week will burn 270 extra kcal (lose 2kg in one year)*

### *Play With the Kids*

Kids enjoy playing with you. How about heading for the park for some football, rounders, or frisbee throwing?

*15 min active kids game daily will burn 45 extra kcal (lose 2kg in one year)*

### *Avoid Television or Computer*

Sedentary recreational activity like reading, watching television or the computer burn the least amount of calories. Whenever possible, replace them with other activity you enjoy.

*Daily 2 hour television will retain 120 Kcal (Add 6 kg in one year). If you nibble 50gm of Bombay Mix during that time you will put on extra 12kg in one year. **ADD TOTAL 18Kg***

### *Try a Sport*

Have you fancied any sport? There are a variety of exercises - running, cycling, swimming, football, cricket, badminton, squash, skipping, yoga ... and more. Find a like minded companion to try it together. One hour of sport a week will keep you fit, tone your muscles and you will feel a great deal better. The important thing is to become active so that your heart is pumping blood at a slightly increased rate and you are burning calories in empowering your muscles! Go for it...

### APPROX CALORIE BURNT BY 75KG PERSON IN 1 MINUTE

ACTIVITY	Kcal/min
Aerobics	4
Bicycling, Stationery	5
Rowing, Stationery	5
Stair Step Machine	7
Yoga	2
Weight Lifting	5
Badminton	3
Bicycling	6
Cricket	4
Dancing	3
Football	6
Golf	3
Running	8
Running up stairs	11
Swimming	6
Brisk Walk	4
Ironing	2
Gardening	3
Sweeping Outside House	3
Cleaning Inside House	2
Hoovering	3
Sleeping	1
Watching TV	1
Computer Work	1
Active Child games	3
Moving household furniture	5

## **6. Eat less salt**

Too much salt can raise your blood pressure which can lead to heart disease and stroke. Lots of people think they don't eat much salt, especially if they don't add it to their food. Three-quarters (75%) of the salt we eat comes from processed food, such as some breakfast cereals, soups, sauces, bread, biscuits. Remember, bottled pickle and ready meals have very high salt content. So you could easily be eating too much salt without realising it. You should not take more than 6g of salt every day which is about a teaspoonful. This is not a large amount, especially when you consider that 75% of the salt we eat is already in everyday foods. If you are not sure, look at the label. Salt is mentioned as 'sodium' and 6gm of salt is equivalent to 2.5gm of sodium. Choose foods with as little salt as possible (eg 1.25gm salt or 0.1 gm sodium per 100gm). Babies and children need even less salt.

## **7. Carbohydrate, Fibre and sugar**

Carbohydrates give energy and are an important component of your food. Carbohydrate can be in the form of sugar, which gets absorbed very fast or starchy food which is absorbed slowly. Similarly some may contain no fibre - such as various sweets & ice creams - or may contain high fibre - such as fruits and vegetables.

Try to eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day. It might be easier than you think.

*ONE portion = 80g of any of these*

- 1 apple, banana, pear, orange or other similar sized fruit
- 2 plums or similar sized fruit
- 1 slice of large fruit, such as melon or pineapple
- 3 heaped tablespoons of vegetables (raw, cooked, frozen or tinned)
- 3 heaped tablespoons of beans and pulses (however much you eat, beans and pulses count as a maximum of one portion a day)
- 3 heaped tablespoons of fruit salad (fresh or tinned in fruit juice) or stewed fruit
- 1 heaped tablespoon of dried fruit (such as raisins and apricots)
- 1 handful of grapes, cherries or berries
- a dessert bowl of salad
- a glass (150ml) of fruit juice (however much you drink, fruit juice counts as a maximum of one portion a day)

Starchy foods such as bread, cereals, rice, pasta and potatoes are a really important part of a healthy diet. Try to choose wholegrain varieties of starchy foods whenever you can. Wholegrain foods contain more fibre and other nutrients than white or refined starchy foods. Wholegrain foods include wholemeal and wholegrain bread, pitta, tortilla and chapatti, brown rice and wholegrain breakfast cereals.

Starchy and wholegrain foods should make up about a third of the food you eat. They are a good source of energy and the main source of a range of nutrients in your diet. As well

as carbohydrate, these foods contain fibre, calcium, iron and B vitamins. Some people think starchy foods are fattening, but they contain less than half the calories of fat. You just need to watch the fats you add when cooking and serving these foods, because this is what increases the calorie content. You also digest wholegrain foods more slowly so they can help make you feel full for longer and help you avoid snacks.

South Asian people often eat too much refined sugar in the form of sweets such as Barfi, Halwa, Gulab Jamun, Jalebi, Mysore Pak, Rasogolla, Ladoo etc. These sweets have a very high content of sugar and fat and should therefore be avoided or reduced. You should also reduce the consumption of foods with added sugar, such as sweets, cakes and biscuits, and soft and fizzy drinks. Having sugary foods and drinks too often can cause tooth decay, especially if you have them between meals. Many foods that contain added sugar can also be high in calories so cutting down could help you control your weight.

#### *Tips for cutting down*

- Try not to have sweets. If you really like them have half the amount you normally take and reduce it further in future if you can.
- Have fewer sugary drinks and snacks.
- Instead of fizzy drinks and juice drinks, go for water or unsweetened fruit juice (remember to dilute these for children). If you like fizzy drinks then try diluting fruit juice with sparkling water.
- Instead of cakes or biscuits, try having a slice of melon or some fruits.
- Try to reduce the amount of sugar you add to your tea or coffee. One teaspoon of sugar contains 25Kcal and if you stop adding sugar, you will lose 5 Kg in weight if you usually drink 4 cups daily.
- Rather than spreading jam, marmalade, syrup, treacle or honey on your toast, try a low-fat spread, sliced banana, or low-fat cream cheese instead.
- Check food labels to help you pick the foods with less added sugar or go for the low-sugar version.
- Choose wholegrain breakfast cereals rather than those coated with sugar or honey.

### **8. Fast food, takeaway and Eating Out**

Fast food and takeaway foods are generally high in fat and salt content. On average one burger contains about 450 Kcal which is similar to that found in a standard takeaway chicken curry or sweet and sour chicken. You need to add further calories to account for accompanying chips, naan or fried rice. These foods should be avoided whenever possible. Why don't you make a sandwich or chapatti wrap with interesting fillings such as left over meat/vegetables from previous meal with salad?

When going out for a meal on special occasions, drink water, diet soda, or unsweetened tea or coffee instead of regular soda or alcoholic beverages. This will save a lot of calories. Share a starter and a dessert with a friend. Stop eating when you are full — listen to the cues your body gives you. Do not be shy to take a remainder of your meal home as you have already paid for it. This can serve as a second meal next day. (Two meals for the price of one). If you have a choice of side dishes, opt for baked potato or

steamed vegetables rather than fries. Even if choices are not listed, ask your server to substitute vegetables or a baked potato for chips. Look for items on the menu that are baked, grilled, dry-sauteed, broiled, poached, or steamed. These cooking techniques use less fat in the food preparation and are generally lower in calories.

## **9. Know your potential health problems**

If you are South Asian in origin, you have a relatively high risk of developing diabetes and heart disease. This is higher still if one of your family members has such problems. Early detection and treatment of these conditions can control these diseases and help you lead a normal life. Therefore it is recommended that you should have a health check up between the ages 40 and 49 every two years and yearly after 50 even if you are healthy. Some of these are performed by nurses or other paramedical staffs. These check ups may include items listed below and other tests as indicated for your age, family history and health condition. If you're not sure what may be best for you, ask your doctor.

- Blood pressure
- Weight and BMI
- Fasting blood glucose and fat levels (checking for diabetes and increased heart attack risk)
- Urine tests check for infections, kidney problems, and diabetes.
- Skin examination for irregular or changing moles, lesions, or blemishes, usually red, white or blue in colour.
- Breast examination in female
- Mammogram and pap smear in female
- Flu vaccination, annually for certain adults age 65+.
- Pneumonia vaccination at age 65 or as directed by your doctor
- Substance use e.g. smoking, alcohol and other recreational drugs
- Health counselling about physical activity, diet and nutrition, healthy weight, safety, sun exposure, depression, sexual practices, potential occupational exposures and other healthy lifestyle issues.
- Every 2 years for vision and glaucoma testing

## **10. Drink plenty of fluids**

Water makes up about two-thirds of our body weight and it is important for this to be maintained. Therefore you should drink approximately 1.2 litres (6 to 8 glasses) of fluid every day to stop us getting dehydrated. The body needs more fluid in hotter climates or when exercising. One of the first signs of dehydration is feeling thirsty. You may have headaches, lack of concentration, be irritable and pass dark coloured urine.

Fruit juices, fizzy drinks, squashes and sports drinks can also be used instead of water. These drinks may have high sugar content with high calorie and may also damage your teeth. Similarly tea and coffee are also fluid but they have caffeine which is a mild diuretic causing body to make more urine.

Milk and water are the best source of fluid.