

KEEP NUTRITION SIMPLE TO GET HEALTHY AND STAY HEALTHY!



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As an integrative medicine physician, I am always looking for ways to partner with patients to help them reach their health goals. In my practice, I encourage patients to combine lifestyle, exercise, and nutrition with conventional medicine to get healthy and stay healthy!

Nutrition is key to the health and well-being of the entire family. Dietary information can be confusing and contradictory, leaving people uncertain about what to eat for the best health. Modern science provides us with a guide for optimal health and nutrition. It is VERY SIMPLE: **Eat MORE nutritious whole foods and Eat LESS processed and fast foods.**

What works best is to keep it simple! You don't need to make perfect food choices all the time to improve your family's health!

Eat more whole foods. These foods are typically located on the outside perimeter of the grocery store and include vegetables, fruits, meats, fish, poultry, whole grains, beans, dairy, nuts, and seeds. Whole foods are bursting with nutrients that help protect us from several health conditions, including heart disease, strokes, diabetes, and Alzheimer's disease. Whole foods taste great, leave you satisfied and make you less likely to go for processed and fast foods.

A well-rounded meal includes protein, healthy fats, colorful veggies, and unprocessed carbohydrates. Proteins include meats, fish, poultry, eggs, beans, and nuts. Proteins are necessary building blocks for our muscles and bones, and they are filling, leaving us satisfied for hours. Healthy fats include nuts, nut butter, olive oil, whole-fat dairy, and avocado, to name a few (Yes! The USDA now confirms that fats can be healthy). These are delicious, decrease hunger, and lower the risk of heart disease, obesity, and cancer. Unprocessed carbohydrates such as whole grains, wheat, oats, rice, beans, lentils, and fruits are full of fiber and many health-promoting nutrients. Eat these foods more often!



The Real Food Pyramid

Eat less processed and packaged foods. These include sugary cereals, chips, pasta, pizza, cookies, candy bars, ice cream treats, and fast foods. They are high in carbs, calories, added sugars, salts, preservatives, and colorings. These foods may be tasty, but they don't promote health. Studies show they increase hunger and cause wide fluctuations in blood sugar. Processed foods are known to impair a child's school performance, can cause irritability, and fuel the obesity epidemic.

Processed foods are often found in the center of the grocery store. The added chemicals and added sugars negatively affect behavior, especially in children, and increase abdominal pain and bloating in children and adults. Sugar-sweetened beverages are particularly problematic for health and metabolism. Sodas, sports drinks, and specialty coffees rapidly elevate blood sugar and triglycerides. Processed carbohydrates and added sugars contribute to diabetes, fatty liver disease, and obesity. Eat and drink these foods less often.

Fermented foods are a terrific addition to a healthy diet. They include fermented vegetables like sauerkraut and kimchi and fermented dairy like yogurt and kefir. They improve GI health, lower inflammation in the body and are "Miracle Grow" for a diverse and happy microbiome, the health-promoting world of bacteria inside your GI tract. Add some to your diet (2 -3 servings daily is optimal)!

Modern nutritional science is also clear that knowing when to eat and when not to eat offers tremendous health benefits! Benefits include lowering blood sugar, inflammation, cholesterol, excess body weight, and even slowing the aging process! This has been called intermittent fasting, but it is better termed **Timed Restricted Eating (TRE)**. TRE involves eating in an 8-10 hour window on most days, for example, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and then fasting overnight. Fluids like water, tea, and coffee are acceptable during the fasting window as long as they are sugar-free. Science teaches us that eating provides fuel for the body, and fasting helps repair the body. Fueling and repairing the body is essential for a long and healthy life! Adding TRE helps my patients supercharge their health! TRE is not recommended for children and may not be compatible with some medical conditions. Please check with your primary care provider.



Improving your nutrition and health can be far less complicated than you might expect. Start by eating more of healthy whole foods and eating less of the processed and fast foods. Then consider eating in an 8 to 10-hour window most days. **Remember: KEEP IT SIMPLE to get healthy and stay healthy!**

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M. Chris Link, M.D. leverages the power of
LIFESTYLE & NUTRITION
to unlock **OPTIMAL** Health and Healing