

Nutrition in a Nutshell

- Food is made up of protein, fat, and carbohydrate.
- We get the energy we need (to do everything we/our body needs to do) from protein, fat and carbohydrate.
- One is not any better than the other, the food and nutrients associated with each has jobs to do in our body, and an imbalance in any one area can create an imbalance in our bodies.
- The foods that contain protein, fat and carbohydrate also contain vitamins and minerals. If you compare your body to a car, the protein, fat and carbohydrate is like the gas the car needs and the vitamins and minerals are like the oil.

Protein foods are (longer lasting energy):

- meat, cheese, nuts, milk, tofu, dried beans, eggs

Fat sources are (longest lasting energy):

- oil, shortening, margarine, salad dressing, milk fat, cheese, nuts, bacon, cream cheese

Carbohydrate sources are (quick energy):

- fruit, bread, rice, potatoes, vegetables, sugar, flour, cereal, milk, pasta, dried beans, crackers

To get a combination of carbohydrate, protein and fat, include in each meal (breakfast, lunch, and dinner):

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| • milk or milk product | i.e. 8 ounces of milk |
| • an additional source of protein | i.e. peanut butter |
| • a source of grain or starch | i.e. 100% whole wheat toast |
| • a fruit or vegetable or both | i.e. 6 ounces orange juice |
| • an additional source of fat | i.e. peanut butter |

If you're eating in a balanced way, you should have enough energy to be satisfied for 3-5 hours.

Balanced meals daily help:

- prevent cravings
- increase metabolism
- increase satisfaction
- allow for weight management
- assure good nutrition

Common Nutrition Myths

Myth: There is an “ideal” way to eat.

Fact: There is no one “perfect” meal plan. Food and eating is a very individual thing. There are some generalizations we can make about eating. For example, it’s important to have balance, it’s important to satisfy hunger, it’s important to eat wholesome foods most of the time, but amounts and times to eat will vary from person to person.

Myth: If I just eat the way _____ and exercise the way _____ exercises, I can get my body to look like her/his body.

Fact: Our bodies are not as moldable as we are led to believe by the media. We have to look at our genetic makeup, bone structure and habits that keep us healthy. One body shape and size does not fit all.

Myth: I have to eat perfectly and exercise perfectly to be healthy.

Fact: There is not a “perfect” eating and exercise plan. With nutrition, if you’re eating pretty wholesome 75% of the time, you’re doing great. Perfection is a form of self-abuse. You also need to be sure you are not sacrificing one part of wellness for another part of wellness. “Health” is more than just nutrition and exercise.

Myth: Everyone needs to take supplements.

Fact: Many people eat a very balanced diet and would not benefit from a multivitamin and mineral supplement (MVI), others might benefit from supplementing their diet. If you’re not sure, contact a registered dietitian for a nutrition assessment.

Myth: My “diet” is horrible, but I can make up for it by taking a mega dose vitamin and mineral supplement.

Fact: A good multivitamin supplement cannot compensate for an excessively poor “diet.”

Myth: Carbohydrates make me fat

Fact: Excess calories cause people to gain weight. It doesn’t matter if it’s protein, fat or carbohydrate, if a person is consuming more energy than expending, they will gain weight. The low carbohydrate diets out now are low calorie diets and that’s why people lose weight.

For more information or to speak with a Registered Dietitian contact, Karen Miller, MS, RD, LMNT, University Health Center, 472-7478 or Office of Campus Recreation, 472-0880 or email: kmiller4@unl.edu