

Become a Flexible Eater

What is healthy eating? It's more than choosing and eating foods from the food guide pyramid recommendations. Healthy eating also includes having a healthy relationship with food - -what your beliefs are about food and diet and the decisions you make. Here are some tips on becoming more flexible in your attitude towards foods and eating.

Gentle Nutrition

Use the food guide pyramid as your guide each day: 6 grains, 3-5 vegetables, 2-4 fruits, 2-3meat/vegetarian protein, 2-3 dairy. Achieve balance over time, not necessarily at each meal. Eat a variety of foods within each group and choose moderately (not extremes of too much or too little).

Honor Your Hunger

Don't rely on the clock to tell you when to eat. Listen to the signals your own body gives you such as a growling stomach or light-headedness. Eat when you're mildly hungry (extreme hunger can cause overeating).

Feel Your Fullness

Stop eating when you're comfortably full - - a satisfied or content feeling that's neither hunger nor stuffed discomfort. If you eat too fast you may be eating much more than you'd like or need.

Enjoy All the Qualities of Food

Tune in to taste, texture, aroma, appearance, temperature and volume of the foods eaten, not just the calorie or fat content of the food.

Challenge the Food Rules

Examine your food and diet beliefs and replace negative ones with more rational thoughts. Let go of "all-or-nothing" rules. Instead of seeing foods as "good" or "bad" think "always" and "sometimes".

Sign a Peace Treaty with Food

You need to give yourself unconditional permission to eat! No food "deals". Deprivation of foods labeled as "bad" can set you up to crave larger amounts of these and other foods and lead to overeating.

Coping with Stress without using Food

If you're eating when you're not really hungry it may be that you're procrastinating using food! Figure out what you're feeling and what you need and get those needs met appropriately.

Respect Your Body

Make your body comfortable with clothing that fits and do nice things for your body. Stop weighing yourself or using tight clothes you hope to get into.

Exercise with the Main Goal of Feeling Good

Don't exercise just to burn calories. Exercise because it feels good to move your body and can keep you in great physical and mental shape.

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