Eating right for better health

OFTENTIMES, we neglect healthy eating habits because of our hectic schedules, laziness or even because we think it is too tedious to prepare a healthy, home-cooked meal. If we continue eating unhealthily, it can be detrimental to our health and well-being in the long run.

These are some unhealthy eating habits and how they can negatively impact your body and your health:

Unhealthy eating habits	Effects
Excessive eating This occurs when you eat more than what is required by your body and cannot stop eating even though you feel full. This often happens when we eat our favourite foods.	• Excessive weight gain, resulting in obesity • Chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer
Late night eating This means eating less than three hours before bedtime and worse still, consuming large servings of oily foods and sugary drinks.	• Excessive weight gain, resulting in obesity • Chronic diseases
Excessive dieting This includes cutting down on food intake excessively by following a particular diet with the only intention of slimming down for aesthetic purposes. Severe restriction of food is not a safe and sustainable way of losing weight.	• Risk of nutrient deficiencies, which can affect normal functioning of the body • Does not result in long-term weight loss
Picky eating Being very picky with food and choosing to not eat certain types of food such as vegetables, fruits or dairy.	• Risk of nutrient deficiencies, which can affect normal functioning of the body.
Skipping meals Regularly skipping main meals such as breakfast and eating at irregular hours every day. Some people have the mistaken belief that skipping meals can help them reduce weight. The fact is that skipping main meals does not help at all in reducing weight.	• Risk of nutrient deficiencies, which can affect normal functioning of the body. • Risk of getting gastritis.

Eating healthy will have you feeling great and energised.

Make healthy eating a way of life for you and your family.

Tips to eat healthy

There are three basic principles in healthy eating – balance, moderation and variety. You should also consume less foods that are rich in fat, salt and sugar.

To have a balanced diet, each meal should have foods from each food group such as grains, meat, fish, eggs and legumes, fresh fruits and vegetables and dairy products.

Having balanced meals will ensure your body is provided with a mixture of carbohydrates, protein, fat, vitamins and minerals to nourish your body adequately.

Moderation is learning to listen to your body by eating when you are hungry and stopping when you feel satisfied.

This is because it takes a few minutes for your brain to tell your body that it has had enough food.

Moderation is vital when eating. Do not eat too much or too little of a particular food. If eaten in moderation, all foods can be part of healthy eating.

Varying your meals will give you better healthy eating options so choose to be adventurous. Because different foods provide different nutrients, you are more likely to obtain all the nutrients you need daily if you eat a variety of foods.

This means trying a different type of fruit with every meal, different vegetables, different meat, fish and so on.

Benefits of healthy eating

When you eat healthy, you will get the right amount of energy, vitamins, minerals and other nutrients.

You will also feel better and have plenty of energy. It can even allow you to handle stress better.

Healthy eating can also prevent a host of illnesses, including heart disease, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes and some forms of cancer and nutrient deficiencies.

Making healthy eating a habit

Healthy eating is the cornerstone to a healthy life, so you should start today to make healthy eating the way of life for yourself and your family.

It is not difficult, it just requires a bit more discipline and determination. Every time you purchase food, prepare meals and order food, pay more attention to the nutritional value of the food rather than just relying on its taste.

You should also eat with others whenever possible as this has plenty of social and emotional benefits. This also helps you to develop eating habits that are healthier.

When you eat in front of the television, it more often than not leads to mindless overeating.

Always eat a healthy breakfast as it can jumpstart your metabolism for the day. Choose to eat small, healthy meals throughout the course of the day as this will keep your energy levels up.

Eating healthy will have you feeling great and energised, and it is the first step in leading a more healthy and fulfilling life.

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