

Tips for Good Health

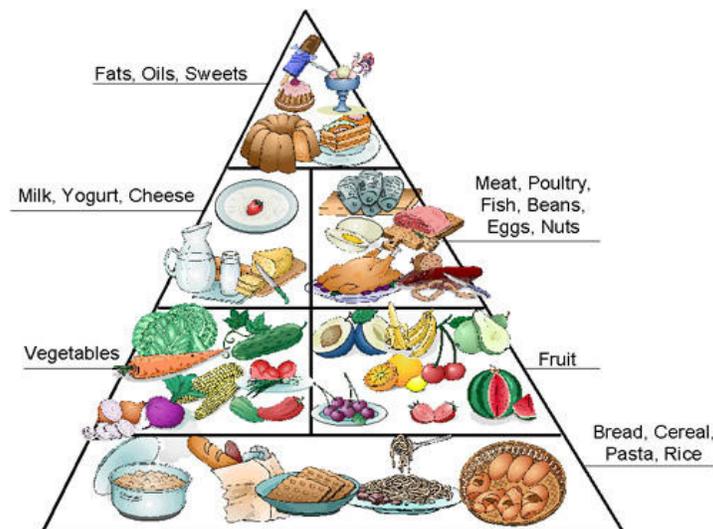
The root cause of many diseases is due to poor diet. Food is the fuel source for our body to function properly. Therefore, a good balanced diet is vital for our body to maintain good health. As the saying goes “You are what you eat”. When eating, it is important to take in consideration some of the tips below.

1) **Eat at set times** (Ex: 9am,12pm, 6pm)

Don't eat at off times such as 3pm and 9pm because this throws the digestive system off. Our body is very closely interconnected with nature, therefore, eating at the appropriate lunch and dinner times are important. Most people who tend to eat at off times, usually may show signs of digestive problems. Skipping meals is not highly recommended because this stresses out the digestive system to go for very long periods without food and extreme hunger.

2) **Eat well balanced meals**

A well balanced meal is a meal that is consistent with the food pyramid. Grains (bread, cereal, pasta, rice, etc) should be the main staple of the meal, then vegetables and fruit, meat and dairy, and sweets should be eaten sparingly. For the most part, a meal should consist of a staple grain as the larger portion, and then meat and vegetables can be more or less equal to each other in portions, or more veggies and some meat. Low carbohydrate diets are not highly recommended, as this should be where the bulk of one's food energy source be based upon. In Chinese, *qi* 氣 (pronounced chee) which translates as “energy” or “vital force” has a grain radical 米 inside the character.





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3) Avoid Cold and Raw Foods

Cold and raw foods are not good on the digestive system. Raw foods include raw meat and raw vegetables. Cold food is inclusive of anything that is cold in temperature or foods whose nature is cold or cooling. It is not recommended to eat foods straight from the refrigerator. All foods have their natural temperature, some have a cooling or cold nature and others have a warm or hot nature. Most raw foods in general have a cold or cooling nature. Salads will fall into the category of raw foods with a cooling nature and are not recommended in Chinese medicine. Through the process of cooking, cold natured foods can be warmed up, thus, eating cooked vegetables is recommended over salads. For those who enjoy the crispy texture of raw salads, veggies can still retain this crispy nature if they are stir fried.

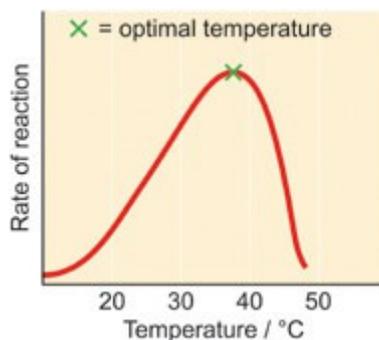
Fruits are recommended to be eaten at room temperature instead of straight out of the refrigerator.

4) Avoid Cold Beverages

This is the same concept as above. Warm or room temperature beverages are better for the digestive system than cold beverages. During the winter, room temperature is equivalent to a cold beverage, and therefore warm beverages are recommended instead. Coffee, because of its bitter nature, is categorized as a cold natured beverage, and should always be consumed warm.

Why Avoid Cold Foods & Drinks?

Coldness slows down metabolism. Our body contains digestive enzymes that catalyze at very high temperatures to break down food. When cold foods and drinks are consumed, the temperature inside the body is cooler, and thus enzymes cannot work at their optimal temperature to break down food. In the long run, this will hamper the digestive system as it is forced to work at less than optimal rate, and eventually in some cases, it can also hamper the proper opening of pores. Below is a chart showing the enzyme rate of reaction versus temperature.



The chart shows that the optimal temperature for enzyme reaction is about 37.5°C (100°F).



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5) Sleep before 11 pm

According to Chinese Medicine, once we open our eyes, we have a layer of protective energy that forms a shield around us to provide protection from pathogenic factors, known as Defensive Qi or Wei Qi. This defensive qi or energy can be viewed as our immune and will continue to protect us externally until we rest and close our eyes to sleep. However, the defensive qi also needs to retreat into the body and rejuvenate as night comes. By 11:00 pm the body's energy should be going internally in the body to rejuvenate for the next day's protection. However, if at 11pm the body is not asleep, and instead still awake, the body will be working overtime because it is not able to rest and rejuvenate because it is required to protect us as we are awake.

6) Release emotions in a healthy way

Excessive or prolonged emotions held within the body can lead to a variety of distortions in the movement and function of *Qi* energy, which can eventually result in pathology.

7) **Exercise:** At least 20 minutes, 3 times per week. However, if extremely fatigued, try not to over exercise, such as running several miles.

8) Avoid using Ice for pain, unless for burns

Ice only numbs the pain, it does not get rid of the problem. Ice releases cold energy that constricts blood flow, which can result in more pain. Since cold air sinks, the cold energy from ice can also seep deep into the body, as deep as the bones, and eventually can cause arthritis in the future.

9) Dress appropriately with the weather.

In the winter, avoid wearing inappropriate clothing such as a jacket with shorts. This kind of exposure to cold air can increase the probability of catching a cold or muscle tightness. Those with a weaker immune system, can immediately feel a runny nose or sneezing when not dressed warmly.

10) Do not ignore signs of discomfort or pain.

These are early signals of imbalance within the body. If addressed at an early stage, it can prevent major problems from occurring. Try not to just take a pain killer to override the body's signs of disharmony.