Benefits of Good Nutrition

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INCREASING ENERGY LEVELS

REDUCES RISK OF CERTAIN DISEASES

HEART HEALTH

IMPROVES YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM AND ABILITY TO RECOVER FROM ILLNESS

Increasing energy levels

A healthy, balanced diet and eating at the right times for your body has a positive impact on your energy levels. It's all about thinking of nutrition as a way to fuel your body really well throughout the day. Of course enjoying tasty food along the way too!

To keep your energy levels even, eat slow release energy foods such as proteins and complex carbohydrates and top up when your body gives you real signs of hunger. Remember to top up fluids first as hunger pangs can indicate lack of hydration rather than need for food.

Keep an eye on your sugar intake from foods and drinks. Sugar is a real energy killer. It is easy to reach for the biscuit packet when you feel really hungry but this will give you an initial sugar high or rush followed by a slump in your energy. Fruit is a good source of natural sugars, and can give you an energy boost that will last consistently longer than any sugary snack or drink. Combine with a small amount of protein such as a small handful of raw nuts for even better effect.

Reduces risk of certain diseases

Raised risk for heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and other health conditions are associated with inadequate consumption of certain foods and nutrients widely considered vital for healthy living, and overconsumption of other foods that are not.

Not eating enough nuts and seeds, omega-3 fats, vegetables, fruits, whole grains, or polyunsaturated fats.

Eating too much processed meat, sugar-sweetened beverages, and unprocessed red meat also raised the risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes-related deaths.

Heart health

The two main focuses for heart health are to keep control of saturated fats and salt in your diet.

Unhealthy fats that can raise your risk of high cholesterol and heart disease include saturated fats which are mostly found in animal products such as meat and dairy, also in oils such as coconut and palm oils. Trans fats such as partially hydrogenated & hydrogenated vegetable oils are in many processed foods – spreads and snacks.

Healthy fats include mono-unsaturated oils and fats such as canola and olive oil. They can help lower 'bad' (LDL) cholesterol and raise 'good' (HDL) cholesterol. Other sources include nuts, nut butters, olives and avocados.

Eating foods that are high in omega-3 fatty acids e.g. oily fish such as tuna, salmon, mackerel, trout, herring and sardines can help lower triglycerides, a type of fat that clogs arteries. Other sources include ground flaxseed, flaxseed oil, soybeans, walnuts and seeds.

Check out the labels for saturated fat and salt content of foods. Bake, steam or grill foods instead of frying. Use minimal or spray oils when you do fry foods.

Improves your immune system and ability to recover from illness

Your gut bacteria weigh 1.4kg, about the same as your brain. There is a growing body of research showing that this gut biome or friendly gut bacteria carry out many functions that are important to wellbeing and health. In simple terms, a diverse gut flora teaches the immune system that not everything is bad whereas unbalanced gut flora can lead to chronic inflammation, the immune system responds as if it is under threat when it is not.

Your gut flora reflects your environment. The number of different species of bacteria that live in the gut is one of the very clearest signs of good (or poor) health. The more species the better.

Sadly a typical western diet (sugar, white flour, refined fats and red meat) doesn't feed but rather depletes gut bacteria. Increase your gut flora by upping your fibre intake, eat as many types of fruit and veg as possible; eat fermented foods such as yoghurt, kefir, sauerkraut; avoid artificial sweeteners; and avoid unnecessary antibiotics and non-essential medicines.