

## **The Basics of Nutrition**

### **Core Facts**

- **Nutrition** is defined as the process of consuming and using food to help the body grow, get energy, and stay healthy. It involves getting a good mix of nutrients across the Basic Food Groups.
- The following is a list of the **Basic Food Groups** and their fundamental **benefits**:
  - **Vegetables**: very healthy. give you a healthy immune system and improve digestion  
Examples - celery, broccoli, lettuce, carrots, spinach, green beans, peas.
  - **Fruits**: provide vitamins, give energy and support overall health  
Examples - apples, bananas, pears, plums, oranges, mangos.
  - **Grains**: provide energy and can assist with overall health  
Examples - rice, bread, quinoa, pasta, cereal.
  - **Proteins**: builds muscle, repairs the body, and regulates hormones  
Examples - fish, beef, chicken, turkey, eggs, peanut butter.
  - **Dairy**: provides vitamins and supports bone health  
Examples - milk, yogurt, cheese, butter, cream.
  - **Fats**: healthy fats support cell growth and heart health, and produce necessary hormones. Unhealthy fats can lead to high cholesterol, obesity and even heart disease.  
Examples (healthy) - almonds, walnuts, olive oil, avocados, dark chocolate.  
Examples (unhealthy) - french fries, doughnuts, fried foods, lard, cakes, cookies.
  - **Sugars**: can be a source of quick energy but also cause weight gain, cavities, tooth decay, and increase the risk of diabetes.  
Examples - candy, cookies, ice cream, soda, pastries.
- There are **many different types of diets** which could be considered nutritious. How nutrition affects someone can be very individual and differ from person to person, based on their genetics. Some people can have allergic reactions to certain food groups, such as dairy or grains. You should do further research to find out which works best for your lifestyle.
- Fundamentally, a **nutritious diet** includes a variety of foods from the basic food groups. If you are able to eat organic or whole foods, rather than foods that are heavily processed, it would result in a higher level of nutrition.

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- When you *eat nutritiously*, you receive the following *benefits*:
  - Higher levels of energy
  - Better mental clarity
  - Healthier immune system and better able to fight infection and illness
  - Enhanced mental health
  - Prevention of chronic diseases
  - Healthier weight management
- When you *don't have a nutritious diet*, you are more likely to have:
  - Low energy
  - A weak immune system which can lead to illness and infection
  - Mental health issues including anxiety and depression
  - Increased risk of chronic diseases including obesity and heart disease
  - Digestive problems
- A *calorie* is defined as a unit of energy that we get from the food and drinks we consume.
- The body uses, or *"burns,"* calories for *every* activity it performs. When you exercise, you *burn* calories. When you walk, you *burn* calories. Even when you sleep, you're *burning* calories!
- Both the *quantity* and *quality* of *calories* we consume determines our nutrition level, which affects both *physical and mental health*.
- The *more active* you are, the *more calories* you burn.
  - The average *male burns 2,200 to 2,800* calories per day
  - The average *female burns 1,800 to 2,200* calories per day
  - If you consume more calories than you use, you will likely *gain weight*
  - If you consume less calories than you use, you will likely *lose weight*