



# Optimal Health

For longevity, happiness, and fullness of life!

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## NUTRITION OVERVIEW

This this cheat sheet is a summary of the most important items for good nutrition and meal planning, and is from the course "Nutrition 4 Optimal Health". The basic nutrients are carbohydrates, proteins, fats, and micro-nutrients. Each of these have subcategories, i.e. carbohydrates which include starch, sugar, and fiber. The foods we eat have some or all of the different groups, i.e. pinto beans have some carbohydrates, lots of protein, and some fat.

### **CARBOHYDRATES**

Carbohydrates are the main source of energy for our bodies. There are refined carbs, such as white sugar and white rice. There are simple carbohydrates such as sugar or apples, and complex carbohydrates such as brown or white rice. We need both simple and complex carbohydrates, but we do not need refined. Refined carbs have the fiber and other nutrients removed, which is not only hard on blood sugar levels but reduces intake of the nutrients we need. We need energy and we need calories, but if we eat too many calories the body stores it as fat. There are three forms of carbohydrates: sugar, starch, and fiber. We should get about 55 to 70% of our calories from carbohydrates.

Sugar comes in many types. There are natural sugars God put in the fruit and vegetables. And there are other sugars that are added to food, mostly refined, and lacking micronutrients. Without fiber, sugar is very hard on our system, causing the blood sugar levels to raise sharply and interferes with our immune system.

Starch is where we get most of our energy from. Our body turns starch into sugar. Starch provides long lasting energy because of the longer digestive period. It is also important to note, starches start being digested in our mouth. Saliva is vital for proper digestion of starches. Potatoes, pasta, and rice have lots of starch. There are two kinds of fiber - insoluble and soluble. We need both. Insoluble fiber is what makes us feel full. When we eat foods without much fiber we can eat a lot more calories and thus gain weight quickly. Both insoluble and soluble fiber helps to slow down the digestion of sugar; but speeds up digestion of other nutrients thus preventing decay; and helps get rid of the waste. Soluble fiber is particularly good at lowering cholesterol out of the blood stream and it transports antioxidants to where they need to go to protect against disease..

### **PROTEIN**

The building blocks for the body. Our body is made mostly of protein, in the form of amino acids. Our body makes protein so we don't need to eat lots of it, but we do need a moderate amount, about 2 to 3 servings, or about 10-20% of our calories from protein. Beans, nuts, seeds, tofu, and most animal products on all have lots of protein. We even get protein from fruit and veggies. Often we get too much protein if we eat the "all America diet."

### **FAT**

We need Omega-3, found in flax seeds, chia seed, hemp seed, and walnuts, for good brain health and Omega-6 found in olives and avocados for other benefits. Excess fat is a major factor in heart disease. Without limiting processed foods and animal products it is difficult to avoid too much fat. We should aim for 15 to 25% of our calories in fat, starting with getting our Omega 3 first.



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## **OTHER ESSENTIALS**

If we eat a variety fruits and vegetables we will get most of the vitamins and minerals we need. But there are some we should be extra careful about such as vitamin D which doesn't come from plant foods. And limited in animal products. The best way to get Vitamin D is to get sunshine. Calcium is also a very important mineral we should be sure to get enough of. Calcium is found in dairy, tofu, almonds, sesame seeds, and green leafy vegetables.

To summarize this course on nutrition and for the real practical application – lean toward a Mediterranean diet which is high in fruit, veggies, nuts, beans, whole grains, some fish, and low in red meat, dairy, eggs, very low in refined foods and sweets. OR opt for a Vegetarian Diet low in dairy (2-3 x per week) or even a Vegan diet, making sure you get enough of the nutrients we talked about using the plate method for meal planning. So simple and easy, but don't underestimate the value of this program.

In any case, be sure to: Eat a variety fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, and beans each day. This will get most of the vitamins and minerals needed. There are some we should be careful about such as vitamin D, limited in all foods, and B12 which is not found in plant foods. The best way to get Vitamin D is sunshine and B 12 is from fortified foods, eggs, and other animal products. Calcium is also an important mineral we should be sure to get enough of. Calcium is found in dairy products, tofu, almonds, sesame seeds, and green leafy vegetables.

Serving sizes: Each diet, program, and government has their own definition of a serving size. A good rule of thumb to follow is: The size of your closed fist equals one to two servings. If it is a light food - like salad your fist is one serving. If it is dense or rich, like nuts, it is two servings. And if prepackaged, consult the label. Thus one small apple for a petite lady is one serving, while a large apple for that Air Force buddy is more appropriate. Consult the plate method for more details.

1. Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, 3 to 5 servings each, pick one kind per meal. I.e. 2 apples and 1 banana for breakfast, and a large salad with carrot sticks for lunch. The body digests food much better if you keep fruit and veggies in separate meals. Change the variety each day to incorporate all the nutrients you need.
2. Add your 2 to 3 servings of grains and starches, again don't live on wheat and potatoes. Try quinoa, rice, millet, rye, buckwheat, kamut, tapioca, etc.
3. Plus your protein rich food such as a handful of nuts, topped off with ground flax on your salad to get those omega 3's and other essential nutrients.

Books I strongly recommend to balance out this course are: "Proof Positive" by Neil Nedley, MD. And "Understanding Nutrition" by Eleanor Noss Whitney and Sharon Rady Rolfes, Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. This is a textbook for college level nutrition, look for the latest edition. This one book is like a 45 hour min course, giving you almost twice the nutrition information as the average doctor. For those interested more in vegan and vegetarian nutrition: "Becoming Vegan" by Brenda Davis, RD, and Vesanto Melinda, MS, RD.

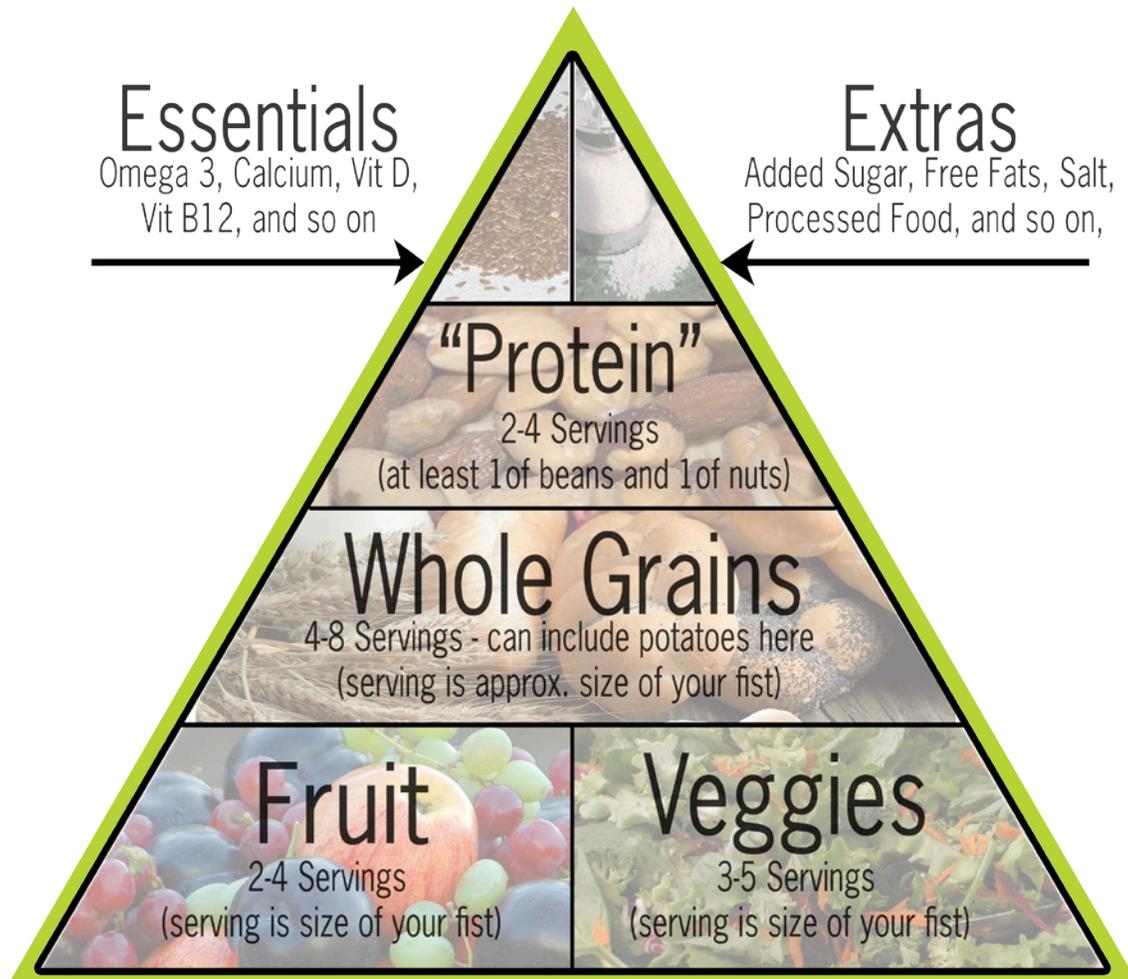


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## DAILY NUTRITIONAL NEEDS



FREE recipes, cookbooks, and info at: [www.  
BodyMindHealth4u.com](http://www.BodyMindHealth4u.com)



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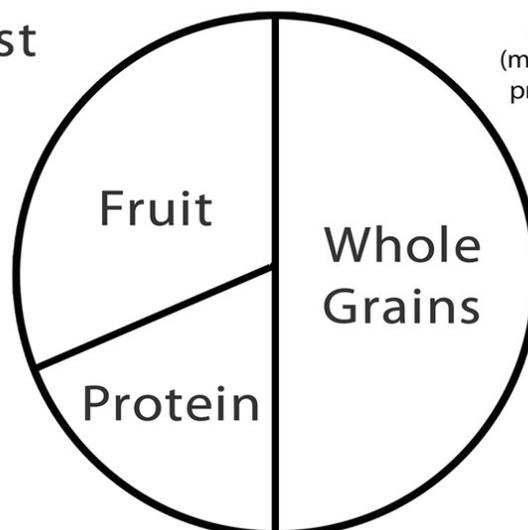
## PLATE AND MEAL GUIDE

Always follow your doctor's recommendations. This guide does not replace professional nutritional advice. Consume DAILY (not in one meal):

- One handful, 1/4 to 1/2 cup depending on your size, of nuts and/or seeds (can also use another protein source such as eggs, dairy, or lean meat, but consider an additional source of nutrients that are found in nuts but may be lacking in animal products.)
- One serving of legumes (can also use another protein source such as eggs, dairy, or lean meat, but consider an additional source of nutrients that are found in beans.)
- 3-5 servings of colorful veggies (can add to your "greens" below)
- One serving of dark greens – dark leafy salad, cooked spinach, kale, broccoli, etc.
- 2-4 servings of fruit – include berries, apples, oranges, and bananas several times per week.
- 2-6 servings of whole grains, variety through the week
- Calcium source (can be in the above list like almonds or sesame seeds)
- Iron source, for women (can be in the above list like lentils)
- B12 (can be in above list – nutritional yeast flakes, fortified nut and soy milks, eggs, etc.)
- Additional protein source for athletes, highly active people, pregnant women, children, and those who have health problems requiring more protein. If you include some animal products, you still need the beans and nuts since they provide so much more than protein.
- Additional items to be mindful of: sugar and sweets, snacks, high fat junk food, and so on.

Here's what a plate should look like for Breakfast: Large portion of whole grains, which provide B vitamins, iron, some protein, fiber, minerals, and more. Next, fruit. Choose fresh or frozen over canned for more nutrient value since water soluble vitamins are diminished in cooking. Remember to include berries several times per week. The "protein" section is a bit misleading since nuts or beans provide far more than just protein. But we are using standardized guides for both meat eaters and

### Breakfast



Calcium Source  
(made be part of the  
protein or veggies!



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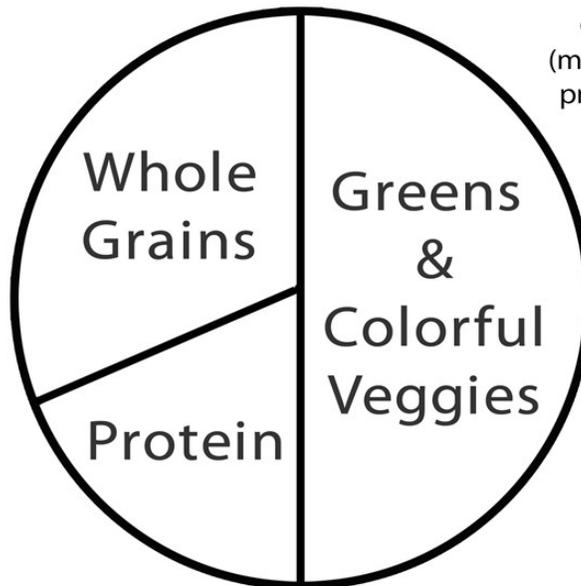
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vegetarians. And for Lunch, having greens and/or colorful veggies as the main source of calories is critical to getting the nutrients you need. From Vitamin C to powerful antioxidants and calcium.

## Lunch

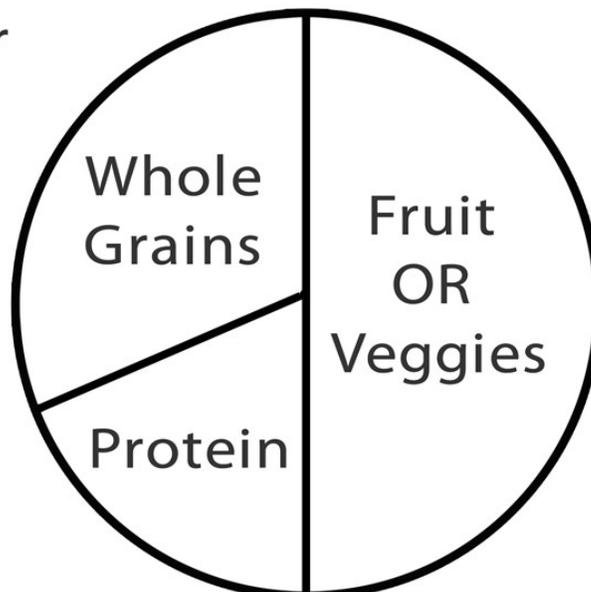
NOTE: potatoes can be grouped in the "whole grains" category for 1-3 servings



Calcium Source  
(made be part of the  
protein or veggies!)

Use supper to eat any of the nutrients or variety of foods you missed that day. It should not be the traditional heavy meal we so often eat. Eat like a king for breakfast, a knight for lunch, and popper for supper.

## Supper



Fruit  
OR  
Veggies