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Superior Nutrition...Superior Health (part 2)

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So, the question remains...How can we make the change to better nutrition? I believe it begins through utilization of sound guidelines and principles for eating that, when done consistently, can make dramatic improvements in our nutrition and lead to better overall health.

Using the New Food Guide Pyramid

The New Food Guide Pyramid was developed to help the average person...people like you and me...eat better by making consistently good choices, day in, and day out. There are several areas of the pyramid that we need to be aware of as a way to increase our chances of improving our nutrition. These areas include the following:

Grains (Whole Grains)

Whole grains provide us with essential vitamins and minerals for optimal health.

The 3 main components of whole grains include the Endosperm, Germ, and Bran. Examples include: Whole Wheat, Buckwheat, Rye, Pumpernickel, etc...

Make at least half of the total grains eaten whole grains. Beware of refined wheat products, such as white bread, or other heavily processed grains because they can tend to cause blood sugar regulation issues, which can ultimately affect your energy levels, and potentially lead to weight management issues.

Fruits & Vegetables

The benefits of eating fruits and vegetables are that they provide us with our essential vitamins, minerals, dietary fiber, & antioxidants for good health, energy, and vitality. It is recommended that we consume dark, colorful fruits & vegetables due to the antioxidants that they provide. Our consumption of fruits and vegetables should not be an option if we want good nutrition and optimal health. The recommendation is for about 5 - 9 servings per day.

"...eat better by making consistently good choices..."

Milk (Dairy)

Dairy Products provide us with essential protein for building healthy bodies and repairing body tissue, and also provide us with important fat-soluble vitamins and provide essential minerals. 3 Cups of fat free or 1% milk or an equivalent amount of cheese, yogurt, or other calcium - rich foods per day is the recommendation. Because dairy products also provide cholesterol, we should be mindful of how much we consume. In addition, make sure you choose the lower fat versions as much as possible, to decrease cardiovascular disease risk over time.

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, Nuts

This group provides us with another great source of protein for building and repairing body tissue. The recommendation is for Low-Fat or Lean Choices for Meats and Poultry. Consider Fish, Nuts, and Seeds as an alternative to Meats & Poultry. Also, consider dry beans and peas as an alternative to meats & poultry. *Unfortunately, many Americans are big MEAT eaters!!* Though the protein is important, we must beware of the saturated fat content since it could increase Cardiovascular Disease Risk!

Sodium

Sodium is an essential mineral which is primarily responsible for muscle contraction in the body. Choose and prepare foods with little salt. We should not consume more than 2,300 mg/day as a recommendation. Would it surprise you to know that most Americans exceed this total by lunchtime on most days?

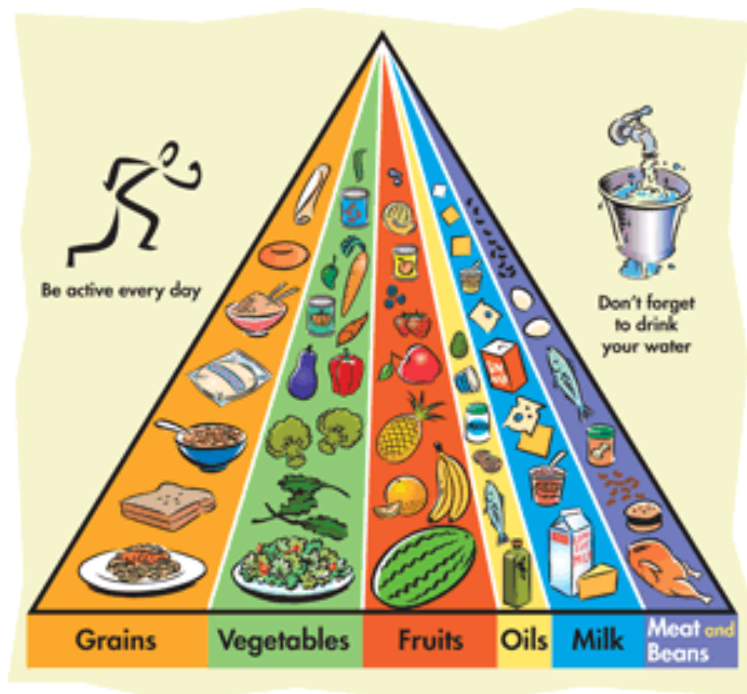
Exercise

Engage in regular physical activity and reduce sedentary activities (look for ways to be more active!!). We should strive to engage in exercise 30 min most days of the week if at all possible. How many of us are doing this? Would it surprise you to know that more and more Americans are adopting sedentary lifestyles?

Added Fats, Sugars, & Alcohol

Did you know that the 20 ounce Coke or other Soda that you drink contains approximately 12.5 tsp of sugar? Is it any wonder that we're having major health problems like diabetes and consistently suffering from lack of energy?

On Top of those issues I just mentioned, there are other nutritional issues that impact upon our health!! In the interest of brevity, as if I've made any attempt at being brief in this article, I'll include the rest of this article in the next post. You can view the conclusion then...then tell me what you think!!



New Food Guide Pyramid (artistic)