Written by Brandi D. Phillips
Thursday, 09 July 2009 15:52

Many people know what kinds of exercises to do in the hopes of loosing weight. But, most people do not know much about nutrition.
Less is known about what constitutes a serving size and how many servings per day a person is supposed to consume.
This article will hopefully answer some of the questions you have regarding nutrition.

Eating in moderation is key. Many health and nutrition specialist suggest eating five to six small meals per day, eating on average about every three hours. These small meals include breakfast, lunch, dinner and two to three small snacks.

According to the book *Essence:Total Body Makeover Body, Beauty, Spirit*, based on a 1200-1500 calorie diet, a person should consume the following servings per day: seven starch/grains, five proteins, four vegetables, four fruits, two dairy, three to four fats and an unlimited number of free foods such as celery, salad, cucumbers, seasoning and some condiments.

Wikipedia.com states that the food guide pyramid suggests 6-11 starches/grains, 3-5 vegetables, 2-4 Fruits, 2-3 meat protein, 2-3 diary and the use of fats, oils and sweets sparingly. If you would like to go get your exact food needs, you can go to mypyramid.com and enter the required information, this service is free.
Serving size varies according to age, gender and physical activity.

Now that we know how many servings we need per day, we need to further understand what constitutes a serving size. On the back of most food packaging labels you will find the serving size and how many servings are in the package. But having this information, still leaves most of us clueless.
I will try my best to give you examples what makes up
one serving
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For starches, one slice of bread, 1/2 cup of pasta, or 1/3 cup of rice (uncooked) equals one serving size. Starches include rice, wheat and corn flour products.

Protein portions can be measured by using the palm of your hand. Most nutritionists suggest eating pieces of meat that are the size of your palm (do not include the fingers).
1 protein serving also includes one egg, or one tablespoon of peanut butter.
Seeds, nuts, meat, and eggs are all proteins.

For your four vegetable servings, you can eat one cup of raw vegetables, 1/2 cup of cooked vegetables, one large tomato or drink 1/2 cup of vegetable juice. Raw veggies can include broccoli, carrots, peppers, cauliflower and green beans to name a few.

one medium fresh fruit, 15 grapes, or 1/3 cup of 100% fruit juice all count as one of your two to four daily servings of fruit. Sometimes fresh fruit can be expensive, so opt to buy fruit when it is in season. You can usually tell what is in season, by finding what is on sell.

If you are a person who is not allergic to dairy products, you can get the recommended servings by drinking one cup of milk, or eating one cup of yougurt. I do not drink milk, so I opt to drink soy milk, which is rich in calcium, magnesium, and Omega-3 fatty acid.

Most people think that fat is a bad thing to include into their diet, but the truth is that fat is very important to include in you meals. Fat should be used sparingly. Try purchasing extra virgin olive oil (evoo), canola, corn or even vegetable oils over butters and spreads which contact high levels of bad fats. Using spray on butters and items such as Pam also can offer you lower fat calories in your meals.

Supplements such as flax seed oil and fish oil also help protect the skin and moisturize the inner body.

I suggest trying to include all of the food groups into your main meals such as breakfast, lunch and dinner. For snacks it may be worth trying to stick to fruits, veggies, and nuts and seeds

(good sources of protein).

Keeping track of and measuring portion size can be a time consuming activity in the beginning. But, as you become more comfortable with making yoru meals according to what you body needs, creating meals will be much less stressful.

Like I have mentioned in the past, it is very important for us to take care of ourselves, mentally, physically and spiritually. Once we learn to take care of ourselves, we can pass our knowledge onto our children and families, thus creating a healthier community.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding nutrition please contact your health professional, a nutritionist, your local library, visit nutrition websites such as USDA.gov, or feel free to contact me @ bodybybrandiva@gmail.com . Salud!!

Brandi Patterson Phillips is a freelance health and wellness reporter with an extensive background in mental and physical health training and education. She is also a Life Skills Coach, fitness trainer and professional dancer.
She is currently studying for her M.B.A. at St. Mary's University in Minneapolis.
Brandi currently teaches @ Creative Arts High School in St. Paul, MN, Summit Early Learning Center in Minneapolis, and is president of the Minnesota Fit Club for Women. Please direct all health and wellness questions to
bodybybrandiva@gmail.com
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