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Dr. Andrew Weil's Wellness Diet
By DR. ANDREW WEIL

OVERVIEW: Aim for variety, and include as much fresh food as possible in your diet. Minimize your consumption of processed and fast food. Eat an abundance of fruits and vegetables, and try to include carbohydrates, fat and protein in every meal. Most adults need to consume between 2,000 and 3,000 calories a day. Women and smaller, less active people require fewer calories; men and larger, more active people need more calories. The distribution of calories you take in should be: 40% to 50% from carbohydrates, 30% from fat and 20% to 30% from protein.

Carbohydrates

On a 2,000-calorie-a-day diet, adult women should eat about 160 g to 200 g of carbohydrates daily. (Most of this should be in the form of less refined, less processed foods.)

Adult men should eat about 240 g to 300 g of carbohydrates a day.

REDUCE your consumption of foods made with wheat flour and sugar, especially bread and most packaged snack foods.

Eat more whole grains (not whole-wheat-flour products), beans, winter squashes and sweet potatoes.

Cook pasta al dente and eat it in moderation.

AVOID products made with high-fructose corn syrup.

Fat

*On a 2,000-calorie-a-day diet, 600 calories can come from fat--that is, about 67 g. This should be in a ratio of 1:2:1 of saturated to monounsaturated to polyunsaturated fat.

REDUCE your intake of saturated fat by eating less butter, cream, cheese and other full-fat dairy products, unskinned chicken, fatty meats and products made with coconut and palm-kernel oils.

*Use extra-virgin olive oil as a main cooking oil. If you want a neutral-tasting oil, use expeller-pressed organic canola oil. High-oleic versions of sunflower and safflower oil are also acceptable.

AVOID regular safflower and sunflower oils, corn oil, cottonseed oil and mixed vegetable oils.

STRICTLY AVOID margarine, vegetable shortening and all products listing them as ingredients. Strictly avoid all products made with partially hydrogenated oils of any kind.

*Include in your diet avocados and nuts, especially walnuts, cashews and almonds and nut butters made from them.

*For omega-3 fatty acids, eat salmon (preferably wild--fresh or frozen--or canned sockeye), sardines, herring, black cod (sablefish, butterfish), omega-3 fortified eggs, hempseeds, flaxseeds and walnuts; or take a fish-oil supplement.

Protein

*On a 2,000-calorie-a-day diet, your daily intake of protein should be between 80 g and 120 g. Eat less protein if you have liver or kidney problems, allergies or autoimmune disease.

DECREASE your consumption of animal protein except for fish and reduced-fat dairy products.

*Eat more vegetable protein, especially from beans in general and soybeans in particular.

Fiber

*Try to eat 40 g of fiber a day. You can achieve this by increasing your consumption of fruit, vegetables (especially beans) and whole grains.

*Ready-made cereals can be good fiber sources, but read labels to make sure they give you at least 4 g and preferably 5 g of bran per 1-oz. serving.

Phytonutrients

*To get maximum natural protection against age-related diseases, eat a variety of fruits, vegetables and mushrooms.

*Choose fruits and vegetables from all parts of the color spectrum, especially berries, tomatoes, orange and yellow fruits, and dark leafy greens.

*Choose organic produce whenever possible. Learn which conventionally grown crops are most likely to carry pesticide residues, and avoid them.

*Eat cruciferous (cabbage-family) vegetables regularly.

*Include soy foods in your diet.

*Drink tea instead of coffee, especially good-quality white, green or oolong tea.

*If you drink alcohol, use red wine preferentially.

*Enjoy plain dark chocolate (with a minimum cocoa content of 70%) in moderation.

Vitamins And Minerals

*The best way to obtain all your daily vitamins, minerals and micronutrients is by eating a diet high in fresh foods, with an abundance of fruits and vegetables.

*In addition, supplement your diet with this antioxidant cocktail:

Vitamin C, 200 mg a day;

vitamin E, 400 IUs of natural mixed tocopherols (d-alpha-tocopherol with other tocopherols or, better, a minimum of 80 mg of natural mixed tocopherols and tocotrienols).

Selenium, 200 mcg of an organic (yeast-bound) form.

Mixed carotenoids, 10,000 IUs to 15,000 IUs daily.

*In addition, take a daily multivitamin-multimineral supplement that provides at least 400 mcg of folic acid and at least 1,000 IUs of vitamin D. It should contain no iron and no preformed vitamin A (retinol).

*Take supplemental calcium, preferably as calcium citrate. Women need 600 mg to 750 mg a day, depending on their dietary intake of this mineral; men should get calcium from food sources.

Other Dietary Supplements

*If you are not eating oily fish at least twice a week, take supplemental fish oil, 1 g to 2 g a day. Look for molecularly distilled products certified to be free of heavy metals and other contaminants.

*Talk to your doctor about going on low-dose aspirin therapy, 1 or 2 baby aspirins (81 mg or 162 mg) a day.

*If you are not regularly eating ginger and turmeric, consider taking them in supplemental form.

*Add coenzyme Q-10 to your daily regimen: 60 mg to 100 mg in a soft-gel form taken with your largest meal. This is a potent anti-oxidant.

*If you are prone to metabolic syndrome, take alpha-lipoic acid, 100 mg to 400 mg a day.

Water

*Try to take 6 to 8 glasses of pure water or drinks that are mostly water (tea, very diluted fruit juice, sparkling water with lemon) every day.

*Use bottled water or get a home water purifier if your tap water tastes of chlorine or other contaminants.

For more information, see healthyaging.com

Books by Dr. Weil include:

8 Weeks to Optimum Health
Eating Well for Optimum Health
Healthy Aging
The Healthy Kitchen
Spontaneous Healing

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