

Nutrition - First Steps

(Warning! Prior to making any of the following dietary changes, if you have any health problems that require specific dietary modifications, first check with your healthcare provider before making any further changes.)

Some general principals to good nutrition:

- Eat only when you are hungry, and avoid “cues” that it is “time to eat” (eating by the clock, favorite TV show, driving by a fast food restaurant).
 - Avoid eating most of your daily calories at one time, especially later in the day. Spread out your food over 3-4 feedings per day; earlier and not later.
 - Eat more plants (fruits, veggies, whole grains, greens) and less meat, especially fatty meats (more chicken and fish; less red meat).
 - Avoid UPF (ultra-processed food). About 3/4 of the U.S. food supply is ultra-processed. These are factory made products made with things you usually would not cook with at home (dyes, chemicals, flavor additives, emulsifiers) that often have much added sugar, salt, fats and chemicals that are harmful to your health.
 - Eat slowly and chew well. This helps digestion, and helps you to be satisfied earlier with a lesser amount of food. Drink plenty of water with your meal (better digestion and it fills you up).
 - Cut out pop, other sugary drinks and alcohol all of which are high calorie and empty of nutrients. Substitute with water with or without flavorings (Stevia sweetened flavors), herbal teas, coffee (decaf?). Avoid artificial sugar substitutes. Some are related to other diseases.
 - Avoid eating while watching TV or other activities. If you want to snack during these activities, consider a low calorie tasty snack such as pop-corn (hot air), fruit, baked low salt chips or nuts.
 - Try not to eat between meals. Consider a light snack to tide you over if needed, such as those listed above.
 - Stay away from food triggers such as excess TV and digital devices, and instead, get away from the kitchen and refrigerator by taking a walk, engaging in a project or hobby, calling a friend (especially one who loves you and will support you through it).
 - Beware of relieving stress, depression, worry and grief with food as a temporary comfort in times of stress. Eat when you are hungry, not when you are upset, lonely or feeling down. Substitute with prayer, reading your favorite Bible passages, putting on some uplifting music or a call to a friend or loved one who can help you through your struggle.
- ◆ For those motivated, consider a food diary for a week (ask for a food diary overprint if you would like one). Then, go over it with a dietitian or knowledgeable friend to see where some changes can be made.
- ◆ Each week or two, pick just one area to work on. When you have mastered that, add another for the following few weeks, and so on.
- ◆ Learn to read the labels on boxes, cans and packages to know what you are eating, Beware that the “serving size” on these labels are based on what a person usually eats, NOT what they ought to eat. Request the hand-out on food labels if you would like one.
- ◆ Lastly and more importantly, pray that God give you the insight, wisdom and power to make the needed changes to improve your health and lower your risk of disease that could cut your life short (See Philippians 4:13, Matthew 11:28-30, Ephesians 3:20-21).