

Wellness Week Day 3 – Nutrition

To build off of yesterday's message, the second way our bodies and brains receive energy is through food.

Nutrition conversations can be just as divisive as having discussions about politics or religion. Most Registered Dietitians will not endorse one particular diet over another such as Keto, Paleo, Carnivore, Vegan, Vegetarian, or Pescatarian, but they will most likely all agree to eat a nutritionally diverse diet that combines both your healthy macronutrients consisting of protein, carbohydrates, and healthy fats and fiber coupled with micronutrients such as your vitamins and minerals.

We typically think of the word "diet" as being restrictive which eliminates certain foods and food groups. This tends to be unsustainable and unattainable to maintain in the long term. The root of the word, "diet" is Greek, for, "a way of living." So finding a healthy nutritionally diverse way of eating that you can remain faithful to is often your best option if it includes healthy choices in the proper amounts along with other healthy lifestyle habits. Oftentimes when we struggle to maintain our healthy weight or lose weight, we overlook other modifiable variables that contribute to weight gain like poor sleep, chronic stress, and physical inactivity. Many of us have heard the saying, "calories in vs calories out" which is not entirely wrong but it can be misplaced if we don't take into account the quality of the calories we take in. Not all calories are created equal. We must be mindful that our calorie intake does not exceed our calorie expenditure. Thought must be given to how much of our nutrition consists of ultra processed foods which have almost singlehandedly contributed to the obesity epidemic that has risen steadily from the 1970's with the advent of nutritional manufacturing processes.

Even in times working midnights with not a lot of food choices available to us if we did not pack a healthy meal from home, we can find a meal in a local convenience store. A healthy way of eating is how we can redefine meals as eating the recipe and the nutrients as opposed to what we think of as our typical standard meals of lunch as a sandwich and a bag of chips or dinner as meat, potatoes, and a vegetable. We can look at eating for the macros and the micros. A convenience store can satisfy our macros and micros with a few options such as:

- Hard boiled eggs
- Fruit
- Yogurt
- String cheese
- Beef jerky
- Mixed nuts and/or seeds
- Healthy protein bars not loaded with sugar

You may have heard the phrase, "you can't out exercise a bad diet." Oftentimes we underestimate the number of calories in a meal and overestimate the number of calories burned in a workout. For example, we burn approximately 100 calories per mile of running. A typical donut consist of 300 calories. Mindful eating practices just allows us to pause and contemplate our food choices and to savor the meal. It does not mean that all desserts are off limits. Just be mindful of eating these types of foods in moderation. If you find that you did not eat as healthy today as you would like, make sure that you don't abandon your healthy eating with the all or nothing mentality. Just reset and restart. Also, if one dimension of your wellness was not ideal today, please try to be disciplined in your quality sleep, consistent exercise, stress management, and social connection so you don't lose the day. Try not to have two bad days in a row or put another way, do not miss twice.

Eat food as medicine or risk eating medicine as food. If we eat healthy consistently we can turn average into excellence.

Check out this vey short video by Registered Dietitian Laura Asbury on the importance of eating healthy

as First Responders to optimize our health, energy, and performance.

https://youtu.be/GCWpf5b_hLw

ATHLETE'S PLATE

EASY TRAINING / WEIGHT MANAGEMENT:

FATS
1 Teaspoon

- Avocado
- Oils
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Cheese
- Butter

Whole Grains

- Pasta
- Rice
- Potatoes
- Cereals
- Breads
- Legumes

Vegetables & Fruits

- Raw Veggies
- Cooked Veggies
- Veggie Soups
- Fresh Fruit

Lean Protein

- Poultry
- Beef/Game/Lamb
- Fish
- Eggs
- Low-Fat Dairy
- Soy (e.g., Tofu, Tempeh)
- Legumes/Nuts

FLAVORS

- Salt/Pepper
- Herbs
- Spices
- Vinegar
- Salsa
- Mustard
- Ketchup

Beverages

- Water
- Dairy/Nondairy Beverages
- Diluted Juice
- Flavored Beverages
- Coffee
- Tea