

What should I eat?

In today's day and age there are an overabundance of choices to make — the most essential being, “what should I eat?” The balance between finding foods that fit into our high speed lives made convenient with fast food, and eating healthy, wholesome foods has become a real struggle.

Healthy eating is the groundwork for everything. Issues arise when we go to one extreme or another with eating. We may start to look at food and meals as something we don't have time for, or some revolve their entire schedule around how often they can eat. Either way, food is essential not only to life, but to weight loss/maintenance, disease prevention, slower aging, and managing stress.

So, the question comes down to ... with all of these choices, what should I eat? The answer is ... **a little bit of everything.**

Everything in moderation is something I was taught in college and I've found to be great advice throughout my career and my life. Eat a diet balanced in lean protein, smart fats, high fiber carbohydrates, and non-starchy vegetables. The goal is to get as many “phytonutrients” (plant-based vitamins, minerals and antioxidants) into the diet as possible.

Protein sources should be organic (cage free, grass-fed, free-range) whenever possible. With the large amounts of antibiotics and hormones that are going into non-organic meats and the pesticide-ridden food animals are consuming, avoidance is the best antidote. Eat protein based on your lean body mass, activity level, and state of health. Divide the total protein amount throughout the day and eat some at each meal and snack. Remember, you

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By Dr. James Proodian

need protein and its components to build muscle, so lean protein is necessary to burn fat and become a leaner individual.

Eat a moderate amount of healthy fats per day, including extra virgin olive oil, coldwater fish, raw nuts (except peanuts), seeds, and avocados. These foods help with brain and nervous system function, balancing hormone response, and controlling inflammation.

The goal with carbohydrates is to eat them in a form as close to a natural state as possible. Avoiding or limiting processed foods and snacks is the best way to avoid eating “empty” calories or foods with no usable nutritional value. Unrefined carbohydrates

are usually foods with a lot of fiber like legumes (lentil, beans, etc.), whole grains, sweet potatoes, berries and apples.

The basic idea is to balance blood sugar levels throughout the entire day and avoid the raising of stress hormones from skipping meals. To do this everyone should eat more frequently throughout the day. For example, eat five or six smaller meals and snacks rather than three large meals.

This is not to say that we can't partake in celebrations with our families and friends. The above is what I call our “primary diet.” This is what our ideal diet would be if we lived in a world where birthday cakes were made of vegetables. I've never seen a broccoli-based birthday cake, so the balance of a diet containing primarily healthy food is imperative to maintain health and well-being.

Lastly, including a high-quality multi-vitamin and mineral com-

plex, along with antioxidants and an Omega 3 supplement daily will also help to maintain energy levels throughout the day and balance out nutrient deficiencies from a poor diet.

This article appears courtesy of Amy Giustino, Nutrition Consultant with AKG Naturals. Ms. Giustino provides nutrition, diet, and weight management counseling services. Dr. James Proodian is an author, educator, and healthcare practitioner specializing in Chiropractic Rehabilitation and other natural healing techniques. He also provides free health lectures and health screenings for companies and other organizations throughout Monmouth County. All of Dr. Proodian's health articles can be found on his website at www.NaturalHealthcareCenter.com. He can also be reached at his practice, Natural Healthcare Center, at 732-222-2219.