

The Optimum Diet – eat well, lose weight, enjoy life more.

Compiled by Stella New, Nutritional Therapist and Xynergy Technical Consultant

The Optimum Diet leads to sustainable **weight loss** whilst providing a wide range of nutrients, leading to health and vitality. Hard to achieve? Not really – even though we are all different, and we do not necessarily benefit from exactly the same diet and lifestyle, following these basic guidelines should help you stay **trim** and full of **energy**:

Eat breakfast. Avoid long gaps without food –although it may go against the grain, eating three meals a day and healthy snacks in-between such as **nuts and seeds** will help you to lose weight and keep it off. If you can't face breakfast have a smoothie, adding in live yoghurt and a spoonful of ground seeds or protein powder such as Spirulina.

Eat a 'rainbow' of 5-8 servings of colourful fruit and vegetables. These contain a wide variety of nutrients to boost metabolism, are rich in antioxidants, vital for immunity and high in **fibre**. Fibre not only helps to prevent constipation, it also balances hormones and cholesterol levels by binding up any excess and escorting it out of the body.

Avoid sugary foods and stimulants such as tea, coffee and alcohol, all of which deplete nutrients, depress immunity and increase the stress load on the body. The more sugar you eat, the more unbalanced your blood sugar levels, leading to symptoms such as fatigue, irritability, increased weight, lack of concentration and anxiety. Replace sugary snacks with dried and **fresh fruit**, and caffeine drinks with rooibos or herbal tea. Include good quality protein at every meal to help slow the release of sugars e.g. nuts, seeds, beans, lentils, fish, eggs, chicken etc.

Choose brown not white. Refined white carbs are like sugar without the sweetness and have been stripped of their nutrients, so choose slow-burning, **nourishing** wholegrain foods such as brown bread, pasta and rice; porridge oats etc.

In with the good fats, out with the bad. Essential Omega 3, 6 and 9 fats are a **vital** component of every human cell and the body needs them to balance hormones, insulate nerve cells, to keep the skin and arteries supple and to keep the body warm. Omega 6 oils found in nuts and seeds, evening primrose, borage and starflower oils help balance hormones and prevent inflammation. Omega 3 oils found in oily fish, linseeds (flaxseeds), pumpkin seeds, walnuts and dark green leafy vegetables help increase metabolic rate, improve energy and keep the skin supple. Avoid saturated and hydrogenated fats as these interfere with the uptake of essential fats and lead to problems such as inflammation and hormone imbalance. For a perfect balance of 3, 6 & 9 Essential Fatty Acids, choose Hemp Seed Oil. Spirulina is also a good **wholefood** containing Omega 6.

And finally:

Regular exercise – diet is only half the equation for health and vitality. The other is regular exercise. A brisk **walk** for twenty minutes three times a week may be all you need. A bit of weight training for muscle tone in between is also a good idea. If you don't want to buy the weights, just fill two, one-litre bottles with water for exercising arm muscles and leg lifts.

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