

GENERAL GUIDELINES

HEALTHY DIET

A good diet is essential for a healthy and balanced life.

- **Consume foods from different food groups** such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, low-fat dairy products, etc. This will ensure that you get all the necessary nutrients for the proper body functioning.
- **Avoid processed foods with large quantities of sugar and fat.** Processed foods, such as fast food, sweets, snacks, and sodas, are usually with large quantity of sugar, saturated fat, and sodium, and are low in nutrients. Avoid or minimize the consumption of these foods.
- **Increase the intake of fruits and vegetables.** Fruits and vegetables are rich in vitamins, minerals, and fibers and are essential for a healthy diet.
- **Choose lean protein sources.** Proteins are essential for muscular tissue growth and repair.
- **Consume healthy fats.** Healthy fats, such as those found in fatty fish, avocados, nuts, seeds, and olive oil, are essential for a good health. Avoid trans fats and saturated fats found in processed foods and fatty meats.
- **Reduce salt intake.** Excessive salt consumption may cause health problems such as high blood pressure. Try to limit salt intake and use natural seasonings to flavor your food.
- **Drink plenty of water.** Water is essential for the proper body functioning and helps maintain the hydration. Aim to drink at least 2 liters of water per day. Calculate the ideal amount of water using the following formula: 40ml to 50ml per kg of body weight.
- **Moderate alcohol consumption.** Excessive alcohol consumption may cause long-term health problems. Try to limit alcohol intake and drink in moderation.

CALORIE BALANCE

Calorie balance is a method used to control the calorie intake and ensure that **you are consuming the right amount of calories to reach your goals.**

You need to know the **number of calories you need to consume daily.** The most appropriate way to obtain this information is by consulting a qualified healthcare professional, such as a doctor or nutritionist, who will use an appropriate method and conduct a comprehensive assessment of your body composition.

Once the recommended daily calorie intake is determined, the next step is to **monitor the number of calories you consume.** This can be done by reading food labels or using calorie-counting apps. It is also important to weigh your food before consuming it to get an accurate measure.

At the end of the day, **it is important to compare the number of calories you consumed with the number of calories you needed to consume.** If you consumed more calories than recommended, you will need to reduce your calorie intake the next day. If you consumed fewer calories than recommended, you can gradually increase your calorie intake to reach your goals. Remember that calorie balance is just a tool to help you monitor your calorie intake, and a healthy and balanced diet is crucial to achieving your goals.

CARBOHYDRATE INTAKE

Carbohydrates are an important source of energy for the body and should be part of a balanced diet.

- **Consume complex carbohydrates.** Complex carbohydrates are those that are digested more slowly and release energy gradually, keeping blood sugar levels stable. They include foods such as whole grains, brown rice, whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta, sweet potatoes, beans, lentils, and chickpeas.
- **Limit the intake of simple carbohydrates.** Simple carbohydrates are those that are digested quickly and can lead to spikes in blood sugar. They include foods such as refined sugar, sweets, sodas, cakes, cookies, and other processed products. These foods should be avoided.
- **Consume carbohydrates according to your energy needs.** The amount of carbohydrates you need to consume depends on various factors such as age, sex, weight, height, level of physical activity, and individual goals. Generally, it is recommended that carbohydrates provide 45% to 65% of the total daily calories.
- **Consider the quality of carbohydrates.** In addition to choosing complex carbohydrates over simple ones, it is important to choose foods that are nutrient-rich and have little or no added sugar. Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are good options.
- **Consume carbohydrates after intense exercises.** Carbohydrates are an important source of energy for physical exercises, especially high-intensity exercises. Consuming carbohydrates after exercises can help replenish muscle glycogen stores and promote recovery.

PROTEIN INTAKE

Proteins are essential for muscle growth and repair, as well as performing other important body functions.

- **Consume lean protein sources.** Choose lean protein sources such as lean meats, fish, poultry, eggs, lettuces, nuts, and seeds. These protein sources contain less saturated fat and cholesterol than high-fat protein sources such as fatty meats and full-fat dairy.
- **Distribute protein intake throughout the day.** It's important to distribute protein intake throughout the day rather than consuming large amounts in a single meal. Try to include a protein source in every meal.
- **Calculate the required amount of protein.** The necessary amount of protein varies based on weight, age, sex, and level of physical activity. A general guideline is to consume around 1.2 to 2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day. Consult a nutritionist or a doctor for more precise guidance based on your individual needs.
- **Pay attention to protein quality.** In addition to quantity, protein quality is important. Complete proteins contain all essential amino acids and can be found in animal sources such as meats, fish, eggs, and dairy. Incomplete proteins are found in plant sources such as beans, lentils, and whole grains and can be combined to form complete proteins.
- **Consume protein after physical exercises.** Consuming protein after physical exercises helps repair and build muscle tissue. Try to consume a protein source within 30 minutes to an hour after exercise.

FOOD PREPARATION AND COOKING

There are several healthy ways to cook and prepare your food.

- **Grilling** is a great option for cooking meat, chicken, fish, and vegetables. You can use an electric or gas grill, or a charcoal grill. It's a good way to add flavor to food without adding extra calories.
- **Baking** is also a healthy way to cook chicken, fish, vegetables, and potatoes. It's a way to preserve the food nutrients while adding flavor and texture.
- **Steaming** can be used to cook vegetables, fish, and chicken without adding fat. You can use a steaming appliance or a pot with a steamer basket.
- **Sautéing** is a way to cook meat, chicken, fish, and vegetables. You can use healthy oils and herbs to add flavor.
- **Pressure cooking** is a healthy and quick option for cooking vegetables, meat, chicken, and fish. The pressure helps to cook the food quickly.

MEAL DISTRIBUTION AND FREQUENCY

The frequency and distribution of meals can vary according to each individual's needs and lifestyle.

- **Breakfast:** Breakfast is an important meal to provide energy for the day. Include foods rich in complex carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats, such as eggs, yogurt, fruits, whole grains, and whole wheat bread.
- **Morning and afternoon snacks:** Have snacks between main meals to maintain energy throughout the day. Choose healthy snacks such as fruits, nuts, yogurt, or cereal bars.
- **Lunch:** Include foods rich in proteins, complex carbohydrates, and healthy fats, such as grilled chicken, brown rice, vegetables, and avocado.
- **Dinner:** The last meal of the day should be lighter. Include lean proteins such as grilled fish or chicken, and vegetables.
- **In addition to meal distribution throughout the day, it's important to talk about meal frequency.** Ideally, aim for 4 to 6 meals per day, avoiding long periods without eating. Going many hours without eating can lead to hunger spikes and excessive food intake in the next meal.
- **In addition to main meals, it's important to include healthy snacks between meals to keep your metabolism active and maintain energy throughout the day.**