



PROTEINS, FATS AND CARBOHYDRATES

Protein, carbohydrates and fats are macronutrients, they're required in larger quantities to provide us with calories (energy) and the building blocks of cellular growth, immune function and repair.

PROTEINS

Include lean protein at every meal from chicken or turkey, fish, red meat, eggs, high protein yoghurt, dairy, tofu, beans, pulses, nuts, seeds and grains.

CARBOHYDRATES

Carbohydrates provide immediate energy from sugars which enter the bloodstream to be used or stored in cells for use later. Carbohydrate can come from starchy foods such as potatoes, rice, bread, pasta and cereal.

Simple carbohydrates, such as refined sugar, sweets, milk and fruit are broken down quickly by the body, immediately raising blood sugar and energy levels, followed by a drop in energy levels shortly afterwards. Whereas complex carbohydrates, such as vegetables, beans, wholegrains and oatmeal have a steadier impact on blood glucose levels.

FATS

Fat plays several crucial roles in our body:

- It is essential for brain growth and function.
- During times of low calorie intake, fat provides energy.
- Fat helps keep us warm and insulates our body.
- It surrounds and protects our vital organs.
- Fat-soluble vitamins (like vitamins A, D, E, and K) require fat for absorption.
- Fats are integral to cell membranes and overall cellular function.

Saturated fats come from meat and dairy sources and are solid at room temperature.

Unsaturated fats are found in plant sources, fortified foods, fish, and grass-fed animal products.

WHOLEFOODS AND FIBRE

We should mainly eat wholefoods (that grew in the ground, lived on the land, were farmed, hunted or swam in the sea). These foods are in a most nutritious form and natural state containing fibre, vitamins and minerals rather than processed foods.

Eat as much variety as possible, eat produce in season to maintain micronutrients, eat the rainbow of colours, eat foods raw, lightly cooked or steamed, eat dark coloured fruits and vegetables, loaded with antioxidants, make stews, soups and pour water from vegetables into soup or gravy to retain and increase our intake of micronutrients.

Deficiencies in micronutrients may affect energy levels or increase our risk from other health conditions and diseases.

Dietary fibre is plant based. Human digestive enzymes are unable to break it down fully so it cannot be absorbed by the body, passing through relatively intact, normalising bowel movements, reducing constipation and diarrhoea by absorbing water and making the stool bulky, keeping the bowel healthy.

Fibre helps lower cholesterol levels and controls blood sugar levels by slowing sugar absorption, helping reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

High fibre foods are more filling and satiating, slower to eat, slower digesting and less energy dense than processed foods, helping us maintain a healthy weight.

Not all processed foods are unhealthy but many processed foods, such as ready meals, baked goods and processed meats have nutrients and fibre removed during processing.

They may be high in calories, with added salt, sugar, fat, preservatives, chemical flavouring agents, colours and sweeteners.

Although they may taste good and be inexpensive, they are not the best choice to have regularly for a healthy diet.

PORTION CONTROL

Fill half of your plate with vegetables, quarter with lean protein and quarter with fruit or starchy carbs, plus a small amount of healthy fats.

HYDRATION

Drink plenty of fluids, especially water, regularly throughout the day to stay hydrated

SNACKING

Opt for fruit or vegetable-based snacks or a small portion of nuts (watch the calories). Be mindful, chew food properly, noticing taste and texture. Sit at the table, eat slowly, putting cutlery down between mouthfuls and avoid distractions like phones or the TV.

FUEL

Fuel your body well with a healthy balanced diet, look and feel your best, remain healthy and full of energy with reduced risk of disease. Make healthy choices most of the time and your body will thank you for it!

Source: Healthy diet - World Health Organization (WHO). <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/healthy-diet>