

## Food and Eating Behaviour Affects Health

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It is said that, "you are what you eat". Food consumed by us should be according to our body requirement. Our body always signals what food is good for it. We need to identify those signals in order to stay healthy and happy. The food which is natural, colourful and attractive provides energy, youthfulness and good for our body. Body gets nourished. After consuming a food if you feel sleepy, lethargic or bloated and you need to consume some sodas, tea or coffee to be active and awake. You must know that this food is not good for your body. Body gets burdened with such food. Healthy eating is absolutely important as it makes our body happy. A healthy mind and soul resides in a happy body. Healthy eating also prevents prevalent health problems like obesity, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, cancers etc.

### Now the question arise, what food is good for my body?

In this era of processed, packed and junk food, it is really confusing to know what food is good for your body to keep it healthy and happy. The messages and information on food labels on packed foods may be misleading or misinformed. A consumer needs to learn a lot in order to stay healthy. The food requirement of each individual varies according to age, height, weight, body type, climate and activity. A person involved in vigorous physical activity may need to consume more energy as compared to sedentary worker. The food requirement of an infant, child, adolescent and adult differ in terms of number of meals, food intake timings and type of food etc. Our body also respond differently to different foods. Some people may be allergic to some foods in same family while others may not.

To know your best foods, you need to be aware, enduring, committed, disciplined and prepared for some experiments with food and food habits. First of all we need to know that with awareness and baby steps we may exclude unhealthy foods from our daily diets and replace them with healthy foods.

- The diet must be balanced and comprised of all the necessary nutrients. The nature has beautifully designed origin of different foods in different seasons. We must respect nature and include seasonal foods in our daily diets.
- The food combination is also important. As various studies have proved that certain foods support absorption of nutrients from other foods and vice versa certain foods hinder the absorption of some nutrients from other foods. e.g. Iron needs Vitamin C for its appropriate absorption in the body. so it is ideal is to eat iron rich food along with Vitamin C food.
- Our digestive system is loaded with enzymes for effective digestion and absorption of nutrients. Our body enzymes may not effectively digest certain foods or the way they are cooked. Therefore, we must choose right food and method of cooking.
- The more we process our food, more complex it becomes for our body to digest it. Cooking destroys natural enzymes present in raw food which contribute to digestion. Therefore, we must cook our food just as much necessary. e.g. you keep raw apple in kitchen, it will not go stale for weeks but an apple pie may go stale within two days. We must associate this simple fact while choosing our food to eat.
- Addition of a fair portion of raw foods in daily diet may result in miraculous results in terms of agility, energy and good health. At least 25-30 percent of our daily diet should comprise of raw food. Addition of more raw food may help in weight loss also.

- Addition of plenty of fruits and vegetables in daily diet ensures healthy gut and weight management .
- Prefer to consume whole cereals, grains and millets. They are nutrient rich.
- Food should be eaten at room temperature, not very hot or cold.
- Chewing a food properly adds to digestion. As saliva in mouth is an important digestive enzyme.30 percent of digestion is completed in mouth with saliva, if we chew food properly.
- Consume your last meal of day preferably before sunset, if not so then you must take it at least 2 - 3 hours before bed time. Save some activity or casual walk time after your dinner. It helps in digestion and better sleep.
- Drink water half n hour before or after the meals. Avoid drinking water during meals.
- Choose cooking methods that retain maximum nutrients like steaming, par boiling, blanching etc. over frying, open cooking, roasting, grilling etc.
- Choose food according to season. e.g. in summers body need to be hydrated so we must eat fruits like melons and in winters we must consume foods that produce heat e.g. peanuts, nuts, sesame etc.
- Fasting helps to detox and cleanse our body. Plan to fast once a week.

### What is a right diet for you?

- The one which provide balanced nutrition, energy and improved health to the body
- That corrects your food choices, habits and provides nutrition to your body.
- The one with which you can stick without any restrictions for years.
- The one with which you can develop a healthier relationship with food.
- The one which helps to curb emotional triggers to overeat.

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