

Listen to your body

As a community dietitian, I am often asked about the latest trends and diets. I think to get right to the heart of the subject, let's put the Google search away, get back to the basics and listen to our bodies. If you could ask your body what it needs to feel good and enjoy life – I think this is what it would tell you.

Eat regularly. Whether you are working, hiking or travelling, your body needs fuel (food) every three to four hours to support what you are doing. Without regular fuel the body's metabolism slows down and becomes sluggish and this can result in weight gain. Too little food can cause weight gain and so can consuming only one or two bigger meals a day. Spreading your food intake throughout the day and eating balanced meals of three to four of the food groups will let your body perform it's best.

Don't cut out the good carbohydrates. Do you ever feel your energy levels dropping in the afternoon or during an activity? It might be due to a lack of carbohydrates (often called carbs) to balance your meal. Carbohydrates come from the bread and cereals food group. Many diets limit this group which is an important team player that supplies the body with fuel and vitamins. Check out Canada's Food Guide to learn more about developing a balanced plan for you.

Keep sugary drinks and treats in check. These choices have the sole purpose of pure pleasure but too much fun, too often can add up faster than you think. A small French vanilla cappuccino can pack 10 teaspoons of sugar and two teaspoons of fat; a 591 ml bottle of pop has 17 teaspoons of sugar. It's ok to enjoy the odd sweet treat but be sure to check in with yourself and ask how often and what else do I enjoy that might be better for me?. Cool smoothies with fresh berries, fruit, and yogurt with 100% juice are a delicious and healthier choice.

Get a move on. Your body loves to move whenever it gets a chance. Try planning activities based on seasons to provide a variety of fun activities that can keep you moving throughout the year. Activity has added benefits that we may not often think about like taking the time to clear our minds, notice our surroundings, connect with friends and family and challenging ourselves by trying something new.

Enjoy real fresh food. Nothing beats home cooked, real, locally grown food. This is the perfect time of year to enjoy fresh picked colourful produce and herbs from your garden or local food markets.

If your body could talk to you right now I think it would say "don't worry so much about the trends and the fads - feed me regularly with good, fresh, tasty food and be sure to keep me moving ... and by the way thanks for listening."

For more information visit www.dietitians.ca and read Canada's Food Guide: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>

Date: July 9, 2013

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