



NUTRITION AND DIET

OVERVIEW

Nutrition is the science of food and their nutrients, and how they interact with the body.¹ Nutrition influences growth and development, energy and weight maintenance, and the development or prevention of diseases.² Diet (noun) is the nutrients that are ingested into the body. When food is ingested, nutrients are absorbed and sent throughout the body. The two main types of nutrients are commonly referred to as “macronutrients” (amino acids, carbohydrates, cholesterol, fat, fiber, protein, and water) and “micronutrients” (vitamins and minerals).³ The body uses nutrients for energy, and to maintain its normal functions including growth and reproduction. Nutrients that are not used by the body are excreted.⁴

A healthy diet can provide energy, help maintain weight, and prevent or reduce the risk of diseases and illnesses. The nutrients the body needs changes throughout life based upon age and other factors, and the specific components of a healthy diet will vary somewhat from person to person.⁵ There are many views about what amounts of specific types of nutrients make up a proper diet. It is generally accepted that a diet should include nutrients from eggs, fish, fruits, lean meats, nuts, poultry, vegetables, and whole grains, along with proper hydration. Though sodium, fat, and sugar should all be monitored carefully within a diet, each are still needed by your body to some extent in order to function properly.⁶

To diet (verb) is the act of purposely consuming or restricting a certain type or amount of food temporarily over a period of time. Dieting in this form is often related to weight maintenance including weight loss or gain. Though short-term diets (or “fad diets”) may yield desired results in the short-term, they often over-emphasize certain nutrients, and may exclude other important nutrients. In most cases it is advisable for a diet to match one’s lifestyle, as a lifestyle-friendly diet may be easier to maintain in the long-term.⁷

RESOURCES

¹ <https://medlineplus.gov/nutrition.html>

² <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/nutrition/facts.htm>

³ <http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/tc/major-nutrients-in-food-topic-overview>

⁴ https://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/cd_hum.nut.html#1

⁵ <https://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/lifecycle-nutrition-0>

⁶ <https://medlineplus.gov/diets.html>

⁷ <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/index.html>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information, tools, and resources about nutrition and diet, visit:

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http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/index.html

<https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/data-statistics/index.html>

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

<https://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/macronutrients>

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/tools-resources/nutrition.htm>

<https://www.nutrition.gov/nutrition-and-health-issues>

<https://www.nutrition.gov/smart-nutrition-101>

<http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/tc/major-nutrients-in-food-topic-overview>