

Jenny MacLean's Fitness Column #8



by Jenny MacLean

Food choices for a balanced diet

There is a lot of information available about food and some of it can seem confusing, complicated or conflicting.

So, here are some basic guidelines to help you maximise taste and nutritional value, whilst keeping your waistline in check.

1. Choose wholegrain

Processed white flour has been stripped of vital fibre and nutrients. Wholemeal bread, pasta and rice fill you up more and release their energy more slowly to keep you satisfied for longer.

2. Eat protein with every meal

Essential for growth and repair for all body tissues, healthy blood cells and infection resistance. Protein keeps you fuller for longer and helps avoid blood sugar peaks and troughs which wreak havoc with your appetite, moods and energy levels.

3. Max up your veg

Packed with a wide range of vitamins and micro-nutrients, vegetables are generally low in calories and contain lots of water, which keeps you feeling full.

4. Cut out added fats

Minimise added spreads on bread, switch creamy or cheesy sauces for tomato based ones, grill rather than fry and cut excess fats off meat before eating. Some fat is vital for body functioning, but only as a relatively small proportion of our overall diet. And there are more than twice as many weight adding calories in fat than either carbs or protein.

5. Ditch the sugar – in food and drink

Sugar has zero nutritional value, but plenty of calories. It hits your bloodstream extremely quickly and exits just as rapidly, providing a roller coaster ride of energy and mood. Sugar also dramatically increases your risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Artificial sweeteners mess with your body too. So, retrain your sweet tooth and replace sugar with suitably-sized portions of honey and fruit.

This is the eighth of Jenny's fitness columns for The Edinburgh Reporter. We hope it helps you to achieve your fitness goals!

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