Nutrition and Healthy Weight

The quantity and quality of the food you eat strongly influence your physical and mental health. Nutrition plays a major role in your success. Nutrition and healthy weight are also closely related to physical activity and body image. A healthy eating plan should include 45-60% calories from carbohydrates, 10-35% from protein, and 25-35% from fat. The quantity of each nutrient you need varies with your caloric intake. For more information on each nutrient, go to www.nutrition.wustl.edu

Healthy eating tips

- **Select appropriate portion sizes:** Choosing healthy portion sizes allows you to eat what you want without ingesting more calories than you can use for energy.
- **Get the most nutrition out of your calories:** Choose foods that provide vitamins and minerals, rather than empty calories from refined sugar and hydrogenated oils.
- **Refuel every 3-4 hours:** Your body needs enough calories to get through the activities of the day. See http://shs.wustl.edu/healthPromotion/NutritionHealthyWeight.htm for Smart Snacking Tips
- **Drink plenty of fluids:** Dehydration is the number one cause of short-term memory loss.
- **Know what you’re eating:** Read nutrition and ingredient labels and ask how your food was prepared.

How to determine your healthy weight

**Body Mass Index** is a measure of body weight status, showing body weight adjusted for height. Because it does not take muscle mass or percent body fat into consideration, BMI alone is not diagnostic, but it can serve as a useful guideline in determining if your weight is within a healthy range. For adults aged 20 years or older, BMI falls into one of these categories: underweight, normal, overweight, or obese. If your BMI shows that you are overweight or obese, losing weight, even a small amount, can improve your health by lowering your risk of disease. Being overweight or obese is associated with increased risk for heart disease, certain types of cancer, type 2 diabetes, stroke, arthritis, breathing problems, and psychological disorders, such as depression. Being under the optimum weight for your height can be normal if you eat healthful foods and are active. However, being underweight can signal a problem. Discuss your weight with a medical provider to determine whether your eating and exercising habits are meeting your health/nutritional needs.

Where can you go for help?

**Campus Experts**

A physician can help you determine if you are at an increased risk for disease and whether you should gain or lose weight. To make an appointment with a physician at Student Health Services, go to shs.wustl.edu or call (314) 935-6666. To schedule an appointment with a registered dietitian in which you can get more information about healthy eating, visit shs.wustl.edu. (You also may write to connie_diekman@wustl.edu with nutrition-related questions.)

**On-Line Resources**