

Health Task : Nutrition 1

Compare your diet to the Canada Food Guide : Use the interactive guide at http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/food-guide-aliment/my-guide-mon-guide/mfg_p1-eng.php to figure out what you should be eating.

- 1) What food are you lacking ?
- 2) Also read the article below and see if you are lacking in any of the common nutrients
- 3) What nutrients might you be lacking in , and how might it affect you ?

Article : What Nutrients do we commonly lack, and what food can we eat to remedy this ?

“Americans consume far too many empty calories -- foods high in sugar or fat and not much else,” says Kathy McManus, PhD, head of nutrition at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. “And we're still not getting people to eat enough nutrient-rich foods, like vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and nuts.”

In 2010, the updated Dietary Guidelines for Americans singled out 10 nutrients that Americans may be missing. Four are so low in many people's diets that deficiency poses a real public health risk. They include calcium, vitamin D, potassium, and fiber. Levels of six other key nutrients are “tenuous,” according to the guidelines, including vitamins A, C, E and K, along with choline and magnesium.

Here's why these 10 nutrients are so important -- and how to ensure you're getting enough.

Calcium

Most of us know that calcium is essential for healthy bones. New evidence suggests that calcium also protects the heart and arteries. It appears to lower the risk of breast cancer and may guard against other forms of cancer, too. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans concluded that many children and most adults fall short on this essential mineral..

Where to find it: Milk and milk products such as yogurt, calcium-enriched tofu, calcium-

fortified orange juice, fortified cereals, low-fat cheeses such as ricotta.

Bonus nutrients: Milk, yogurt, and low-fat cheeses are great sources of protein as well as essential nutrients such as potassium.

Simple changes you can make: Have a bowl of fortified cereal with milk for breakfast. Help yourself to yogurt for a snack or quick lunch.

Vitamin D

The sunshine vitamin, D is produced by the skin when we're exposed to sunlight. Since many of us work inside, we may not get enough sun exposure to generate adequate vitamin D. Although recent research suggests that vitamin D may be important for a range of functions, the best evidence points to its essential role in building and maintaining strong bones.

Vitamin D continued...

Where to find it: Salmon, rockfish, tuna, vitamin D-fortified milk, fortified orange juice.

Bonus nutrients: Along with vitamin D, fish are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which protect the heart and may also slow age-related memory problems.

Simple changes you can make: Drink a glass of milk with lunch. Have a serving of a fatty fish such as salmon or sardines two or three times a week.

Potassium

Most of us know that too much sodium in the form of salt can raise blood pressure. Less well known is that fact that too little potassium also contributes to blood pressure. Falling short on potassium may also increase the risk of kidney stones and osteoporosis.

Where to find it: Potatoes, tomatoes, spinach, carrots, beans, peas, lentils, yogurt, bananas, fish, orange juice.

Added bonus: By eating more fruit and vegetables, you'll increase your intake of vitamins A, C, and K, all of which are in short supply in the average American diet.

Simple changes you can make: Add a few bean or lentil dishes, such as split pea soup and chili, to your repertoire of home-cooked meals. Slice a banana over your breakfast cereal.

Fiber

Fiber is the indigestible part of plant foods. Researchers have long known that fiber helps keep digestion regular. Newer findings show that it protects against heart disease and type 2 diabetes and may help people maintain a healthy weight.

Where to find it: Vegetables and fruit, whole grains, cooked dry beans and peas, nuts.

Bonus nutrients: Nuts are rich in unsaturated oils, which help protect against heart disease. Beans and lentils are great sources of potassium and magnesium.

Simple changes you can make: Snack on whole-grain crackers or popcorn (a whole grain). Choose breads with 100 percent whole grain flour as their first ingredient. Look for breakfast cereals with at least 5 grams of dietary fiber per serving. Add canned, rinsed chickpeas to salads, soups, or pasta dishes.

Vitamin A

This crucial nutrient is key to maintaining healthy eyesight and robust immunity. It also plays a role in many other physiological functions, including tissue growth.

Where to find it: Dark green and bright colored vegetables, such as sweet potatoes, pumpkins, winter squash, spinach, collard greens, romaine lettuce.

Bonus nutrients: Most vegetables are loaded with fiber and other vitamins, including C, another nutrient deficient in some diets.

Simple changes you can make: Have a salad with mixed greens along with dinner. Snack on carrot sticks or sliced red peppers. Make sure your daily diet includes at least four and preferably more servings of vegetables.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C may not ward off colds, as once believed, but it is essential for maintaining a strong immune system. A potent antioxidant, vitamin C may help lower the risk of cancer. It's also required for wound healing. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans reports that some diets fall short of this critical nutrient

Where to find it: Citrus fruit, guava, peaches, kiwi, cantaloupe, red peppers, broccoli,

Brussels sprouts, kale, cauliflower.

Bonus nutrients: Many fruits and vegetables rich in vitamin C also contain fiber, as well as other vitamins, including A and K.

Simple changes you can make: Have a piece of fruit for breakfast. Add a serving of vegetables to your lunch or dinner menu

Vitamin K

Vitamin K is essential for normal blood clotting. It also appears to play crucial roles in bone mineralization and cell growth. Falling short may cause bruising, nosebleeds, and brittle bones, among other problems.

Where to find it: Kale, collard greens, spinach, beet greens, mustard greens, Brussels sprouts, broccoli.

Bonus nutrients: Dark leafy green vegetables are loaded with vitamins A and C, as well as loads of fiber.

Simple changes you can make: Experiment with ways to add a serving of dark leafy greens to home-cooked meals. Spinach makes a great topping for pizza, for instance. Broccoli is a tasty addition to stir-fries and casseroles.

Vitamin E

Vitamin E is a potent antioxidant. By neutralizing unstable oxygen molecules, it may help prevent damage to cells that could lead to cancer. Severe vitamin E deficiencies can cause nerve damage. Because many Americans don't get enough nuts and unsaturated oils, they may be in danger of falling short on this crucial nutrient.

Where to find it: Almonds, sunflower seeds, hazelnuts, sardines, avocados, sunflower oil, cottonseed oil, safflower oil.

Bonus nutrients: Nuts are rich in unsaturated fats that help protect against heart disease.

Simple changes you can make: Snack on nuts. Put sliced avocado on sandwiches. Cook with a vitamin E-rich cooking oil.

Choline

This little known nutrient is essential for building and maintaining healthy cells. It is particularly important for muscle and nerve function.

Where to find it: Eggs, cooked dry beans, peas.

Bonus nutrients: Beans and peas are nutritional treasure troves, rich in protein and an array of nutrients, including folate, magnesium, and potassium.

Simple changes you can make: Have a hard-boiled egg for a snack now and then. Whip up an omelet with vegetables for lunch. Add cooked dry beans to your favorite Italian tomato sauce and spaghetti recipe.

Magnesium

Magnesium is required for more than 300 biochemical reactions in the body. It helps regulate blood pressure, maintains bone strength, and ensures a healthy immune system. After age 31, 320 milligrams. Men between the ages of 19 and 30 need 400 milligrams. Then the requirement rises to 420 milligrams.

Where to find it: Halibut, nuts, peanut butter, spinach, oatmeal, beans, lentils.

Bonus nutrients: Beans and lentils are rich in fiber and plant-based proteins. Nuts and fish are excellent sources of unsaturated fats, which help prevent heart disease.

Simple changes you can make: Have a peanut butter sandwich on oat bran bread for lunch. Snack on nuts. Make a three-bean casserole for an easy side dish at lunch or dinner.