

## Tips for Healthful Eating

Most of us feel that we know what we need to do to eat well, yet few of us find the time or energy to follow healthy eating principles on a regular basis. Eating is how we nourish and fuel our bodies. Both how and what we eat also serves to signal our bodies about the environment in which we are functioning. Our bodies respond to these signals by altering our hormonal status. If we eat a few cookies for lunch while we are busy multi-tasking, the signal our bodies receive is that we are under stress and nutrients are not available. If we sit to eat and spend 20 minutes enjoying a salad with grilled chicken and a piece of fruit our bodies understand that there is time to relax and nutrients are plentiful. The hormonal response to the foods we eat plays a large role in our general well-being and our long term health.

Below are a few of my favorite tips to get you started on a healthful eating program:

1. Never skip a meal.
2. Eat at least 3 meals and 1 snack daily (ideal is 3 meals with 2 snacks).
3. Set time aside to enjoy your meal in a relaxed setting.
4. Eat slowly.
5. Chew your food until it is liquid (see, mother really does know best!).
6. Never have a protein without a carbohydrate.
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8. Have a non-starchy vegetable with each meal and snack.
9. Drink at least eight glasses of water a day.
10. Avoid highly processed and prepared foods (shop the periphery of the grocery store).

Healthful eating is a skill which requires work and planning. Many of us feel that we don't have the time in our busy lives to worry about nourishing our bodies. I believe that if we don't find the time to nourish ourselves while we are healthy, our bodies will demand to be properly cared for as we begin to deal with the diseases of poor lifestyle choices. Make a promise to yourself today to incorporate just one of these tips into your life. Slowly add the rest. Don't get frustrated with yourself or give up if you find you slip for a day, a week or longer. Nourishing our bodies is a skill we are not taught and requires a commitment that our society does not value. Challenge yourself and those around you to live better!