



1 ☐ ☐

### **Eat a low saturated fat diet.**

Excess fat is considered the 'bad guy' of nutrition as it contributes majorly to being overweight, which results to making us more prone to type 2 diabetes, heart disease, cancers, gallbladder disease and sleep apnoea. Fat intake should not be more than 30 per cent of the total calorie intake. No more than 8 to 10 per cent should be saturated fat, with the remainder mono- and poly-unsaturates. The lower the fat intake, the better for your health.

### **2 ☐ ☐ Plenty of grains and legumes is great for your diet**

Grains and legumes which contain no fat are important for good health and should make up a large proportion of our meals and snacks. Bread, cereals, rice, pasta, couscous and other foods made from grains are key sources of starchy carbohydrate, B vitamins, fibre and a number of minerals. Peas, beans and lentils provide considerable amounts of protein (crucial for vegetarians), B vitamins and a significant fibre content. Their fibre is of the soluble type which researchers have found helps remove cholesterol from the body (in a similar way to oat bran).

Their carbohydrate is slow-digesting so it benefits dieters, people with diabetes and athletes who need endurance energy!

### **3 ☐☐ Lots of vegetables and fruit is even better**

Vegetables and fruits are the most nutrient-dense group of foods. For very few kilojoules, you can obtain your vitamin C, beta-carotene, folate, fibre, vitamin E, vitamin K, potassium and magnesium, as well as a host of phyto-chemicals such as the flavonoids and carotenoids which are daily essential nutrients. Various studies confirm that people with the highest intakes of vegetables and fruits have the lowest rates of heart disease and cancer. Make these colourful items a regular feature in your meals.

### **4 ☐ Be moderate or cut out on sugar and sugary foods**

Sugar in moderation can be part of a healthy diet, as today the scientific evidence shows that sugar does not contribute to health problems, with the exception of dental carries (tooth decay). This applies to sugar (white, brown, raw) honey, treacle, glucose and corn syrup. However, sugar does not supply no essential fibre, vitamins or minerals and can displace other more nutritious foods, as often happens in the diets of low-income groups and teenagers (hence the name 'empty kilojoules'). Sugar can indirectly lead to obesity, with all its health risks. Around 75 per cent of our sugar intake comes from packaged and instant foods, many of which are high in fat, for example pastries, chocolate and biscuits.

### **5 ☐☐ Buy low-salt foods and use salt sparingly**

Like sugar, salt has been much prized throughout history. The word 'salt' comes from the Latin word salarium (meaning salary), as Roman soldiers were paid a regular allowance to purchase salt. Too much salt, however, has been linked to the development of high blood pressure (hypertension) especially to ageing individuals. The average diet contains more than twice the recommended level of salt. Even if you stopped sprinkling salt over your food, your salt intake would still be high, as around 75 per cent of our salt intake comes from commercial foods like bread, cheese, ham and luncheon meats, snack foods, butter, margarine and biscuits. So make it a habit to look for salt-reduced and no-added-salt foods to help you shake the salt habit.

### 6▯▯ Regulate alcohol intake

Moderate to heavy intake of alcohol is associated with high blood pressure and cancers of the digestive system, such as the mouth, throat, stomach and bowel. Too much alcohol can also cause weight gain. A gram of alcohol has almost twice the kilojoules of either carbohydrate or protein. A safe intake is two drinks a day for women and four drinks for men. Women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant should not drink at all.

### 7▯▯ Drink plenty of water

Water is the best thirst quencher and appetite suppressant. Your body needs about two litres or eight glasses of water each day to keep it hydrated and to maintain vital biochemical reactions. People who live in hot climates or who sweat a lot or work in air-conditioned offices need even more to maintain fluid balance. Without enough water, the kidneys cannot properly flush out all the impurities that collect in the blood which leads to build-up of certain kidney stones

### 8▯▯ Maintain healthy weight, neither too fat nor too thin

The right food and regular exercise will ensure your weight is healthy. Eating low-fat meals with moderate amounts of bread, potatoes, cereals, vegetables, salads and fruit will help you lose excess weight, if you need to, and help you to stay slim if you don't – especially as you get older. Aim for healthy eating over the long term.