

THE SURPRISING TRUTH ABOUT **Eating a Diverse Diet**

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For years nutritionists recommended eating a diverse diet, but it turns out that advice may be outdated. A recent study by the American Heart Association found that a **varied diet can actually increase the risk of obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.**

Before the twentieth century, it made sense to try to eat a lot of different foods because malnutrition was widespread. Today, many adults are consuming too much food, including both healthy and unhealthy choices

If you're looking for simple strategies for healthier eating, consider switching to a less diverse diet. Learn more about the benefits and how to get started.

Eating Fewer Foods

The American Heart Association suggests sticking with a certain number of healthy foods you like. If you're used to following each new internet food trend, this may be challenging, but you can make it appealing.

Try these ideas to eat fewer foods:

- 1. Save time.** In addition to the health benefits, think about the time you'll save. Grocery shopping and cooking will be quicker when you're following a familiar routine.
- 2. Maintain weight loss.** Many adults gain back all the weight they lose and more. Eating fewer foods is a long-term strategy that can help you stay slim.

3. **Find other outlets.** Free yourself from emotional eating by finding more constructive ways to manage stress, socialize, and entertain yourself. **Call a friend or take a walk** instead of using candy or chips to deal with your feelings.

4. **Avoid buffets.** You've probably noticed that having plenty of options can tempt you into eating more. Be especially vigilant with holiday dinners and tasting menus.

5. **Sleep well. Being sleepy also contributes to overeating.** Getting eight hours of sleep each night will help you stay on track with your new habits.

6. **Drink water.** Our bodies sometimes confuse thirst with hunger, so remaining hydrated will boost your willpower, too. Drink water or tea before, during, and after meals.

7. **Be flexible. At the same time, a diet that is too restrictive can backfire.** Leave room for an occasional treat.

Eating Higher Quality Food

When nutritionists talk about diversity, they usually mean eating red vegetables as well as green ones. Unfortunately, the public is more likely to be thinking about adding junk food and desserts on top of their sensible meals and snacks.

Remember that the quality of your diet is just as important as the number of calories.

Try these tips:

1. **Eat more produce.** Aim for at least 6 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Most are low in calories and high in vitamins and fiber.

2. **Choose whole grains.** Get most of your carbohydrate calories from whole grains. Good choices include brown rice, rolled oats, and whole wheat bread and pasta.

3. **Evaluate proteins and fats.** Some proteins and fats are superior to others. Replace hamburgers and fried chicken with leaner sources like beans and fish. Cut back on saturated fat from animal sources and use olive oil and nuts for flavor.

4. **Limit empty calories. Keep processed food and refined carbohydrates to a minimum.** That includes beverages, too, like soft drinks and any kind of alcohol. As a bonus, you'll also be eliminating the main sources of excess sugar and salt.

5. **Balance your nutrients.** Design each meal and snack to include a mix of proteins, fats, and carbohydrates. Energize in the mid afternoon with a handful of almonds and baby carrots. Enjoy a green salad tossed with salmon and yogurt dressing for dinner.

Eating a more uniform diet can help you to manage your weight and reduce your risk for many chronic conditions. Find some healthy foods you love and plan your meals and snacks around them.