

Health

To be physically healthy, we have to get used to
Good food habits,
Good physical activities and
Enough sleep

Good Food Habits:

- Human body mainly needs Carbohydrates, Proteins, Fats, Vitamins, Minerals and water other than air. While carbohydrates are the main source of energy, the remaining nutrients maintain the body in proper functional condition (Fats and proteins also give energy).
- Consumption of about 80 to 100 grams of legumes (bean seeds, peas, green grams, Bengal grams, pea nuts, etc; weight is of dry legumes) per day is sufficient. They are rich in proteins (They have other nutrients too). Muscles and body organs are made of proteins. Sprouts contain about 15% to 30% more proteins and vitamins than their core forms. Alternatively, non vegetarian foods can be consumed for proteins.

Seafood is rich in proteins. Seafood can be consumed as a non vegetarian alternative to legumes, in the same quantities (80 - 100 grams per day). [Especially fish is very good for health as it is rich in omega-3 fatty acids in addition to proteins. Omega-3 fatty acids are found to be good for cardiac (heart) health by increasing good cholesterol, reducing triglycerides and preventing blood clotting. Several other studies also suggest that these fatty acids may help lower high blood pressure. Soybeans, flax seeds, walnuts, olive oil, etc are vegetable sources of omega-3 fatty acids.]

Four full chicken eggs or six eggs with yolk removed give the same amount of proteins approximately. It is not good to eat more than one or two egg yolks every day as egg yolk contains high amount of saturated fat.

Meat also is rich in proteins (quantity - 80 to 100 grams per day). But, meat is not healthy. Especially red meat (Beef, Mutton, etc.) has incompatible chemical composition for human body, which was found in scientific studies. Meat is not easily digestible and disturbs body functionality and eventually mind too.

[Consuming of the above protein foods in the suggested quantities one type alone or in combinations satisfies about half of the proteins requirement per day and the suggested quantities are optimal. Other consumed foods of cereals, nuts and milk products too have proteins in lower percentages, but sufficiently compensate for the daily requirements.

A little more than required protein consumption is not problematic. Too much protein consumption causes health problems.]

- Fruits and vegetables give anti oxidants (anti oxidants protect from aging, cancer, heart diseases, etc.), vitamins and minerals. Cooking destroys some of these nutrients. Taking some uncooked fruits and vegetables keeps body healthy and compensates missed nutrients in the cooked food. Consume enough vegetables in meals. The average fruit and vegetable consumption per day should be about 500 grams (or 5 servings) for an average man.
- Body needs around 50 grams of fat daily. It is generally obtained to the sufficient extent from main food made of legumes, cereals, sea food, meat, eggs and dairy products. It has to be taken care to avoid excess fat from fries, sweets and oil foods. Excess fat blocks blood vessels and disturbs overall body functionality. Excess body weight resulting from fat puts extra burden on knees, heart and lungs.
- Milk and milk products are balanced foods (It was found in studies that children consuming milk get richer and more balanced nutrients than children not consuming milk. However, imbalance in the nutrition intake of children not consuming milk could be due to their unbalanced consumption of other foods). Milk digestion engines are more in children than in adults. However, adults can consume milk products like curd/buttermilk as an alternative to milk as per their digestion convenience. Any excess fat from milk or milk products can be got rid through physical activity. Milk or milk products consumption is not mandatory for good health when other kinds of nutritious foods are consumed sufficiently in a balanced manner. The quantity of milk or milk products to be consumed also depends on the overall diet plan and needs.
- Eat unpolished rice or wheat or other cereals (or food items made from these) in meals for carbohydrates along with other nutrients. Take them in addition to consuming nutritious food like fruits, grams, milk, nuts, etc. To reduce excess body weight (fat) and be fit, carbohydrates (sugar also is a carbohydrate) and oils consumption has to be reduced while keeping the other nutritious food consumption normal. Excess carbohydrates than our body needs get converted to body fat.
- Prefer to consume food un-cooked where ever possible. For example, legumes can be consumed after soaking or as sprouts. Carrots can be eaten without cooking.
- Do not fill the stomach completely when taking meals. Take a bit less than what you can eat to have easy digestion. Generally our appetite is more in the morning and afternoon; less in the evening. Food has to be consumed accordingly. Both starving and over eating is unnatural to our body and so they are unhealthy. Eating without appetite also is unhealthy as it will not get digested properly and may lead to many other problems eventually.
- Consuming sufficient fiber foods (mainly wheat/wheat bran, leaves, vegetables and fruits with their skin and pulp) keeps the intestines clean and has other health benefits too.

- Ghee improves memory power.
- Take last meal of the day at least 3 hours before going to bed at night. This gives good digestion, low fat formation in the body and good sleep.
- Eat daily at regular times.
- Drink 3 to 4 liters of water daily. Drink more water when you get up in the morning. Keep drinking water throughout the day in intervals of less than 3 hours.
- Drinking a little water (up to one glass) before/during/after meals does not affect digestion.
- Do not lie or sleep immediately after meals. Walk a little after meals.
- More or less salt in food than our body needs is injurious to health. Natural unprocessed foods have exactly sufficient salt that our body needs. Use salt optimally in meals; not much, not too less.
- Wash mouth well with water after eating.
- Keep away the foods cooked in repeatedly used oil and foods burnt black. These foods are carcinogenic (cancer prone).
- Sweets, high oil foods, alcohol, artificial food colors, artificial flavors, artificial preservatives, artificial pesticides, fluoride, lead, mercury, etc reduce longevity by slowly damaging the body directly or indirectly. Avoid them as much as possible. Prefer organic foods.
- Do not consume lemon or orange (Citric fruits) juice (fruits) with empty stomach in the morning. If done so, citric acid in these fruits can cause ulcers in the stomach (Citric fruits are good for health otherwise).
- Eating curd/yogurt before going to bed at night is bad for health.

Good Physical Activities:

- Stretching and warming up of muscles, joints and abdomen nurtures them and enhances life. Exercises like weight lifting, dumbbells, pushups, pull-ups, etc. give fitness. Yoga also gives similar results.
- Physical activities like walking, jogging, swimming, etc. burn excess fat in the body fast and also benefit the overall health. A little intense exercises like jogging and swimming are especially good for the cardiovascular (heart and blood vessels) and lung fitness.

- Pranayama (breathing exercise) enhances the functioning of the lungs and thus over all body. Pranayama makes breathe easy and deep throughout the day and thus keeps oxygen supply to the body good. Good oxygen supply gives activeness to the entire body including the brain. Good amount of oxygen in the blood reduces load on the heart as the heart can pump now slowly.
- 30 minutes to 1 hour of exercise is required daily on average, depending on the body kind and condition. A little intense activities like jogging, swimming for at least 10 minutes a day keeps body very active.
- Have short stretches and walks throughout the day, especially after meals.
- People with jobs involving enough physical activity need not consider additional physical activities (at least not all types of exercises).

Sleep:

- Go to bed early at night and sleep as long as you feel sleepy. Sleeping for 1 hour at noon adds to activeness as found in studies. 6 to 8 hours of sleep is required daily.

Important Notes:

- Many of the habits mentioned above are for a normal adult. They are not fully applicable to children, athletes, old people and unhealthy people.
- Mentioned food habits are not strictly applicable. They are optimal or applicable to most of the people. Variations can be made as per body height, weight and age. Small variations in practice are okay in many cases. Extreme variations can be troublesome.
- Mental stress affects physical health. Avoid stress.
- In case you fall ill, do not take self medication without doctor's consultation or without sufficient knowledge about the medicine. Many medicines have severe side effects after a limit, which you may not know in advance.
- Most of the artificial medicines including vaccines give side effects. Vaccines increase the risk of arthritis, neurodegenerative disorders, etc. It is good to stay fit so that there is less dependency on medicines and it is good to take only essential artificial medicines.

Significance of health:

- A healthy man is disease free, strong and has flexible body. A healthy man can live long.
- A diseased or weak body leads to physical pain and shortened life span.

- With an unhealthy body, sadness and mental disturbance is certain to even a sage. Concentration is lost. Goals cannot be achieved without mental peace.
- The ultimate goal of the human life is to reap happiness as much as possible.

So, good health is the first need.

References:

- A lot of websites in the internet, a lot of articles in the news papers and many TV programs on health are the sources of the most of the information given in this document. This document has been prepared after a judicious study of these different sources. The owners and providers of these sources are thanked.
- For qualifying information and detailed health information, you are suggested to search in the internet or books.