



Give more than lip service to good health

In the perfect world, everyone would:

1. Eat at least 5-10 vegetables a day and relish every bite;
2. Eat only as much food as necessary to maintain a healthy body weight and feel completely satisfied;
3. Enjoy exercising at least 20-40 minutes a day; and
4. Help children to develop great eating habits by the age of 8 to promote long term health.

Alas, as we all know, this is not a perfect world. And the overall health of the nation would likely improve if everyone did only one of the above actions.

Why don't we follow these simplest of health guidelines? Two reasons blamed for the lack of appropriate action are time and money. And of these two justifications, time is the reason blamed most often.

We're short of time

In today's busy world, people claim there is not time to shop for food or cook meals. As a result, over 60 percent of all meals consumed in America are eaten out. This luxury removes the time required to shop and cook and the drudgery of cleaning those dishes. However, eating out usually limits our choices of healthy fare, like fresh fruits or nonfried

vegetables. Frequently it is a challenge to get 5 fruits and vegetables in our diets.

With the exception of restaurants that serve buffets or salad bars, where can you get an extra side order of cucumbers or sliced tomato? How many restaurants offer side orders of steamed baby peas or long beans or carrots?

In exchange for the time saved in eating out, we sometimes give up more than we realize. Our restaurants or fast food establishment of choice dictates the portion size of each food that you eat. Unless a restaurant offers smaller portions (a rare luxury indeed), a large man and a small woman are served the same amount of calories.

And because many of us have been taught to not waste food, many people will overeat to clean their plates. This in turn reaffirms in peoples' minds that larger portion sizes are normal and creates future large food portion expectations.

Convenience vs. nutrition

Convenience eating, whether eating out or from read-to-eat supermarket foods, sends a message about priorities. And the message American children and teenagers are getting is coming across loud and clear. Why plan if you can

eat out? Convenient eating is more important than good nutrition.

What are the Health Options for this seemingly unsolvable situation?

Here are a few ideas. Even if you eat most of your meals away from home, stock your kitchen with frozen or canned fruits, fruit juices, vegetables, and vegetable juices. A really quick breakfast can consist of fruit juice and a bagel or a smoothie with or without yogurt. And remember the basic bowl of cereal with milk topped with fruit. Rinse the bowl immediately to make clean-up as simple. Breakfast cereal is usually less expensive with less calories than a fast food meal.

If your profession requires lunch out, then don't forget to order a salad with the dressing on the side. But when you eat in, try to go light with a V-8 juice or similar canned vegetable juice or a couple of pieces of fresh fruit for lunch.

Refrigerated apples last a long time and remember how good it is to bite into a cool crisp apple. There is no preparation time and no dishes. And with the time save, you can run errands, pay bill, or enjoy getting out for a walk.

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