



Nutritious
& Delicious

HEALTH MATTERS!



WITH GARY BAVERSTOCK
NUTRITIONAL THERAPIST

EATING WELL

Eating well on a regular basis is essential if you want to prepare yourself for life's tough demands, and to stay fit and healthy for now and the future. A healthy balanced diet should contain a variety of types of food that is covered below. So please read on for our Nutritionist, Gary Baverstock's 10-point Eating Well plan.

1. Stabilise Your Blood Sugar Levels

Carbohydrates contain sugars, as can proteins, which are released into the blood once digested in the form of glucose – the body's main source of energy. The body needs to regulate levels to keep within strict limits to maintain health and energy, but this can easily become imbalanced. When blood sugar is low energy levels will dip and the body will stimulate a feeling of hunger, or even a craving for sweet foods. When it is high, it may slow down your circulation and the body will store the excess glucose as fat. **TIP: Never get too hungry! Eat a healthy low sugar breakfast, lunch and dinner, plus healthy snacks in between (if necessary), and avoid stimulants to keep your levels stable. Go for Complex Carbohydrates for slow release energy!**

2. Choose Complex Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are an important source of energy. Also known as dietary starch/fibre, complex carbohydrates are high in vitamins, minerals and plant chemicals that support health and wellbeing. They also provide excellent levels of fibre that promotes gut health and slows down absorption, helping to stabilise blood sugar. The reason wholegrains are so good is that they contain the bran, germ and endosperm of the plant so you get all of the nutrients they can offer. **Tip: choose green vegetables, wholegrains like oats, quinoa & amaranth, starchy vegetables like potatoes, sweet potatoes & corn, and pulses like beans, lentils & peas.**

3. Eat Protein with Every Meal and Snack

Protein is absolutely essential for the body to grow and repair, as it forms enzymes, antibodies, hormones, hair, nail, bone, teeth, haemoglobin (blood protein), neurotransmitters (serotonin and adrenaline) and skin etc. It also keeps you feeling fuller for longer, keeping hunger pangs at bay and can stabilise blood sugar levels – leaving you less tempted to snack on sweet foods. **Tip: Make fish, poultry and eggs your primary sources of protein. Soya, Quorn, pulses and nuts are also good sources, especially for those on vegetarian or vegan diets. Avoid using dairy foods as the main source, as they are generally higher in fat.**

4. Eat at Least 5 Portions of Vegetables and Fruit Every Day

Vegetables and fresh fruits should be the nutritional cornerstone of every diet. A portion (80g) is approximately equivalent to a small apple, or what can fit into the palm of your hand. Vegetables and fruit are amazing sources of vitamins, minerals, fibre and plant chemicals that help regulate all bodily processes. Try to include some raw plant foods for added variety and optimum nutrition. Aim for 75% vegetables and 25% fruit. **TIP: Add extra vegetables to stews, salads and soups to easily achieve your 5 a day. Make one main meal with ½ a plate of vegetables, by increasing salads or steamed veggies. Pulses & juices do count, but only as one portion – whatever you eat. Potatoes do not count!**

5. Bulk up on Your Fibre!

Food should have character and substance, and offer some resistance when you eat it. Whole foods and whole grains have much, much more roughage than their white processed counterparts and are high in nutrients like B vitamins, which we need for energy production and stress control. Pulses are some of the healthiest carbohydrates you can eat - they provide energy to your muscle cells and brain many hours after a meal, and they are loaded with soluble fibre that keeps your gut healthy and populated by beneficial bacteria. Fibre also helps to slow digestion and lower cholesterol / fat absorption. **TIP: Increase the fibre content of your diet by choosing wholegrains like brown rice, barley, quinoa, rye, oats and millet, and simply adhere to the 5 a day principle.**

6. Stay Hydrated – with Water!

Our body is made up of 50-75% water. As the primary fluid in the body, water serves as a solvent for minerals & vitamins and plays a key role in the digestion, absorption, transportation and use of nutrients. Water is the medium for the safe elimination of toxins and waste products and whole-body thermoregulation is critically dependent on it. There is no system in the body that does not depend on water. **TIP: We metabolise some water from the foods we eat – as long as your diet contains a lot of fruit and vegetables. Sip water throughout the day and aim for up to 1.5ltrs per day. It is best not obtained from fruit juices, tea or coffee. Only water hydrates, cleans and detoxifies like water.**

7. Eat the Essentials!

Omega 3 and 6 are essential fats, which cannot be made by the body and therefore need to be included in the diet. Omega 3 supplies us with EPA & DHA (important chemicals) that are crucial for brain function, vision and counteracting inflammation. Good sources of omega 3 fats are found in oily fish and also in flaxseeds (linseeds), walnuts and their cold pressed oils. It is believed that our diets contain enough omega 6, but sources include – avocados, sunflower and sesame seeds & their oils. **TIP: Eat nuts & seeds raw and avoid cooking with omega 3 oils as they are easily damaged by heat. Include at least 2-3 portions of oily fish in your diet weekly. Think SMASHT! - Salmon. Mackerel. Anchovy. Sardines. Herring. Tuna (fresh).**

8. Don't be Afraid of Fat

There are good fats and bad fats! Good fats are essential for the body to function well and can support the weight loss process if eaten moderately e.g. fat from oily fish or unsalted nuts. Coconut oil is a healthier saturated fat, which is only used for energy and body processes, and not stored. Bad fats like trans, or hydrogenated and high levels of other saturated fats should be avoided. **TIP: Read the labels to avoid these fats and choose low-med saturated fat quantities. Cook with olive or coconut oils, or a little butter and only add extra virgin oils at the table. Avoid margarines and trans fats!**

9. Reduce Stimulants

Stimulants such as the caffeine in tea, coffee, red bull and cola – consumed for an energy boost – actually have the opposite effect giving you a false energy rush, followed by a corresponding dip, which will leave you lacking energy and looking for your next caffeine 'fix', and can be damaging if consumed in high quantities. **TIP: Ideally don't drink coffee or black tea, especially first thing, but if you do keep it to one / two cups a day and on a full stomach. Choose diluted fresh fruit juice, water, or herbal teas & decaf coffees as healthier options.**

10. Say No to Processed Foods!

Processed foods are to blame for the sharp rise in obesity levels and chronic disease, according to the World Health Organization. This is because they are often low in the nutrients essential to health, fibre, and beneficial fats, but high in calories, fats, sugars and salt. Furthermore, they generally contain compounds that rob the body of essential nutrients and are damaging to health, like trans fats. **TIP: Read the labels to avoid these products, if you don't understand what it is – then it's likely to be bad for you! Identify healthier pre-prepared foods that are low in salt, sugars and fats. Cook in bulk and freeze for quick and easy meals when pressed for time.**