

HEALTHY EATING

**Water** is the necessary for all life (as we know it) to exist. There are guidelines and online quizzes that factor in multiple factors to determine how much water one should drink every day. I like to start my day with a class of water, drink room-temperature water 10-15 minutes before each meal and have a clear glass of water on my desk at work as a visual reminder.

**Caffeine** is the most consumed drug in the world. Limiting caffeine to the equivalent of no more than 1-2 normal cups of coffee per day is a good maximum limit to set for oneself. If you have anxiety issues you may want to minimize caffeine as much as possible.

**Limit alcohol** as recent major studies found alcohol has no health benefits and is actually a carcinogen.

**Limit sugar** as some research equates sugar with poison. Keep in mind, there is a strong correlation between the health of your teeth and the health of your heart.

**The word diet** has, unfortunately, been coopted by the weight-loss industry and now has a negative connotation to it. Take your diet seriously, know your family history (my mom and I have a similar body type, food issues and diet), and pay attention to what types of foods seem to agree best with your body. I believe food is medicine, if you have a healthy diet.

**Fad diets** are generally very poor ways to manage weight or accomplish other health goals. General recommendations are eat a variety of foods prepared in a variety of ways, don’t eat unless you’re hungry, eat larger meals for breakfast (though breakfast is not a necessity), later in the day eat smaller meals, “grazing” (eating 4-6 smaller meals) is recommended, don’t eat until you’re full but rather until you are about full, don’t starve yourself (as this can result in people binge eating later), enjoy meals with family and friends, and allow for some indulgences.

**Associations with foods** can have powerful implications. Comfort foods (high calorie, high carbohydrate and/or high sugar) are an example, and people often seek these out in times of stress or depression as a way to cope (I believe McDonald’s relies on this dynamic by giving out free toys with happy meals). It is important to develop healthier responses to stress/depression. Make sure to take time to eat at a reasonable pace, and eat away from your desk at work as often as possible, to reduce stress associated with your meals.

**Supplement fads** seem to happen every year with the media creating a frenzy that most everyone is lacking a crucial nutrient (e.g., Vitamin D a few years ago, testosterone recently) that are overhyped and, subsequently, overprescribed. Be careful about buying into them as after the media frenzy dies down, it seems like most research does not support the initial hype. Also, vitamins are generally a poor substitute for whole foods.

DISCLAIMER: This is not medical advice.

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