

Completely Well

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Know Your Numbers: CBC, CMP and Lipid Panel

A basic laboratory screening typically includes:

Complete Blood Count (CBC) - Measures the levels of red blood cells, white blood cells, platelet levels and hemoglobin and hematocrit. Can be used to determine anemia, infection, inflammation, or bleeding disorders.

- Red blood cells: Carry oxygen throughout your body
- White blood cells: help to fight infection and disease
- Platelets: Help your blood to clot
- Hemoglobin: a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen from your lungs to the rest of your body
- Hematocrit: A measure of how many red blood cells are in your blood

Complete Metabolic Panel (CMP) - Provides an overall picture of your body's chemical balance and metabolism as well as kidney and liver function. This test measures the following:

- Glucose: blood sugar which is the body's main source of energy
- Calcium: In blood, it's essential for nerve, muscle and heart health.
- Electrolytes (sodium, potassium, bicarbonate (CO₂), chloride): Minerals that help to control the amount of fluid, and the balance of acids and PH balance in your body.
- Albumin: This is the main protein in your blood and is made in the liver.
- Total protein: Includes albumin and globulins that are made in your liver. The amount of protein in your blood.
- ALP (Alkaline phosphatase), ALT (alanine transaminase), AST (aspartate aminotransferase): These are enzymes that are primarily made in your liver. Enzymes are proteins that affect chemical reactions in your body.
- Bilirubin: Your liver removes this waste product from your body. It's a waste product of old red blood cells.
- BUN (Blood urea nitrogen), creatinine: Your kidneys filter these waste products out of your blood.

Lipid Panel - A blood test that measures lipids—fats and fatty substances used as a source of energy by your body. Lipids include cholesterol, triglycerides, high-density lipoprotein (HDL), and low-density lipoprotein (LDL). *Detailed information about this test will be included in next month's newsletter.*

Review the labs yourself, then you should share the lab results with your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider can help you to interpret the results and provide a plan to keep you healthy.

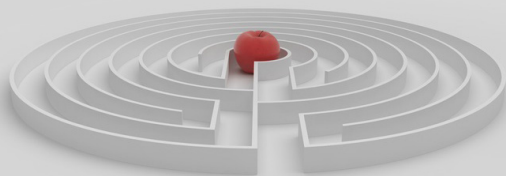
What Does “Good Nutrition” Mean?



What should you eat when you're advised that “good nutrition” should become an essential part of your healthful habits? Food provides energy, nutrients, and substances essential for growth and health. It's important to remember that eating proper nutrients support healthy body function, while excess nutrients may be stored as fat, which may lead to weight gain.

The six categories of nutrients required for health are:

1. Carbohydrates: The body's preferred energy source.
2. Proteins: Fundamental for body structure.
3. Fats: Essential in small amounts, preferably unsaturated.
4. Vitamins: Aid in healthy chemical reactions, releasing stored energy.
5. Minerals: Needed for tissue growth, maintenance, and energy release.
6. Water: Vital for overall health.



Individual nutrient needs vary based on factors like age, body size, gender, genetics, growth rate, illness, physical activity, medications, and pregnancy/lactation.

A daily balanced diet involves eating:

- 50% from fiber-rich fruits and vegetables.
- 25% from starchy vegetables, whole grains, legumes.
- 25% from a mix of plant-based and animal proteins.

The basics of nutrition can be simple if you try to eat a diverse range of fruits, vegetables, proteins, and small amounts of healthy fats, along with staying hydrated. Eat foods that are minimally processed and enjoy your favorite less nutritious treats in moderation.

Contrary to what many people believe, vitamins do not provide energy to the body, but they do help release the energy that is stored in carbohydrates, proteins and fats.

Wellness Briefs

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, a month dedicated to providing information and increasing awareness about colon and rectal cancers. Affecting approximately 1 out of 23 individuals, colorectal cancer is a cancer that starts in either the colon or the rectum, usually with the growth of a polyp.

Risk Factors:

- Age. The risk for colorectal cancer increases with age.
- Personal/Family Medical History. A family history of polyps or colorectal cancer increases your risk.
- Diet. A diet that is high in red meat, processed meats, and saturated fats and one that is low in fiber, fruits and vegetables increases the risk for colorectal cancer.
- Weight and Activity. Being overweight or obese increases the risk of colorectal cancer. A sedentary lifestyle is also linked to an increased risk.
- Smoking and Alcohol. Smoking increases the risk of many types of cancers, including colorectal cancer. Drinking more than two drinks a day (men) or one drink a day (women) is associated with an increased risk of colorectal cancer.

You should also consider being screened if you have blood in your stool or have rectal bleeding, persistent changes in your bowel habits (such as diarrhea or constipations) that cannot be traced to changes in diet, abdominal pain or discomfort that will not go away.

Screening:

Screening is recommended beginning at age 50 for most people. Anyone with a family history of colon cancer or with a personal medical history of inflammatory bowel disease may be screened earlier. Discuss with your doctor your risk factors and what screenings are right for you and contact your doctor if you have any concerns about your digestive health.

Your Gut Health and Fiber

Most people do not eat enough foods with fiber. Aside from the heart and gut health that fiber offers, the health benefits of fiber include a reduced risk of chronic disease, a boosted metabolism, and reduced inflammation.

Insoluble vs. Soluble Fiber:

- Soluble fiber dissolves in water and can slow digestion which regulates your blood sugar levels, feeds your healthy gut bacteria, and absorbs fatty acids that keep your heart healthy. Foods with soluble fiber, include oats, fruits, berries, beans, nuts and seeds.
- Insoluble fiber does not dissolve in water and can speed up digestion, sweeping out your insides and creating bulk for your waste. Insoluble fiber comes from the roughage in fruits and vegetables. Foods include whole wheat and wheat bran, whole grains, vegetables such as celery, carrots and zucchini, and leafy greens.

You should consume about 25 grams of fiber per day. Fiber-rich foods typically include both soluble and insoluble fiber. Make it easy to get enough fiber by filling half your plate with vegetables (and/or fruits) and a quarter of your plate with whole grains at each meal.

Get Back On Track

Many people begin the new year with plans to improve some aspect of their life. Typically, many begin to revert to old habits by about mid-January (second Friday in January is called “Quitters Day” for a reason), and by March surveys have shown that more than 80% have given up on the plan altogether.

Do not quit! Resolutions do not need to begin solely on January 1! They can start or re-start any time - so start now!

Here are some tips for getting back on track:

- Know your starting line. Take measurements, weigh yourself, have blood tests, see a professional fitness instructor to have your fitness evaluated. Knowing where you will start will help you make decisions about what is most important to your health. Complete a Health Risk Assessment on your Wellness Portal!
- Make sure that your goals are realistic. Try making short-term goals that will lead to reaching larger goals.
- Take a close look at your original goal. What were you aiming to achieve, and how did you think you would achieve it? Carefully define what you want to accomplish in achievable terms. Redefine the goal if you need to.
- Make your goals public. Reach out to friends and family who will be supportive of your goal. Having a “team” to help you along and cheer you on makes reaching your goal easier.

Most importantly. Be as kind to yourself as you are to others. Engage in positive self-talk even when you haven’t had the best day. You are worth the effort, and you may need to remind yourself of this regularly.



*Give
yourself
a Little
Glimmer*

Many individuals are familiar with the term “Trigger” in the context of mental health. In this context, a trigger is a behavioral cue, whether internal or external, that affects one’s emotional state, often causing feelings that may overwhelm you or create stress. Typically, triggers are associated with past events or behaviors that have caused discomfort or fear.

On the flip side, we have “Glimmer,” the opposite of a trigger. Glimmers are behavioral cues that elicit a sense of joy or comfort. While it may be easy to overlook or not immediately recognize these moments, paying attention to your glimmers can significantly lift your mood, creating a feeling of joy, coziness and safety.

Discovering your glimmers is a personal journey, as they vary for each individual. Potential glimmers may include basking in sunshine, admiring your favorite flower, spending time with a pet, immersing yourself in nature, witnessing a smile, indulging in a special treat, enjoying the scents of mowed grass or flowers, observing a rainbow, hearing laughter, savoring your favorite song, or simply thinking about someone you love.

Reflect on moments when you felt safe and happy, pinpointing something within that moment as your glimmer. Being mindful of the glimmers in your life and having them as go-to sources of positivity can be a simple yet effective method for regaining focus and balance in your mind.

Create a list of your personal glimmers. You can write them down if you wish. Remind yourself to embrace a glimmer if you are in need of a positive moment in your day. Glimmers can be a brief moment, a small token of joy, serving as powerful tools for enhancing your well-being.

Healthy Habit: Sound Bouncing in Nature

Try Sound Meditation when you spend time in nature. During Sound Meditation you will pay attention to the sounds in the world around you. This is a method of meditation that does not necessarily need to be practiced in nature, but it is more likely to be soothing if you do so.

Sound Bouncing is one method of practicing Sound Meditation:

1. Set a timer for the length of time that you want to meditate. (You may want to try this without a timer first just to see where it leads you, but 5 minutes is a good starting point.)
2. Start with your breath. Close your eyes and take 10 deep breaths and count each one. Once you reach 10 breaths, you will shift your attention to the world around you.
3. What do you hear?
4. Once you identify an individual sound, you will label it, then search for something else to hear. (Example: You hear birds, you say to yourself "birds," then you move on.)
5. Let the sounds and your labeling flow by without judgement. You can repeat the labels if you start to run out of things to "hear" and you haven't run out of time yet.
6. When your timer sounds you will finish with a few deep breaths.

Want to know more?

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info@wellfitcorporate.com
[wellfitcorporate.com](https://www.wellfitcorporate.com)

