



A Healthy Diet

Humans and other animals get everything they need from the food they eat. As food is digested, the body extracts useful nutrients which it can then use. Food is like the fuel in your car: without it, you wouldn't be able to do anything. Because your body has different needs, it is important to eat a balanced diet. This means eating foods which provide all the different nutrients that your body needs.

Carbohydrate

Carbohydrates are found in foods like potatoes, bread and pasta. Carbohydrate can be broken down and used by the body for energy. Wholegrain foods like wholewheat bread or brown rice release their energy slower. This is good because it will fuel you for longer. The NHS recommends that around a third of our diet is carbohydrate.

Protein

Protein is a very important nutrient. It is like a building material for the body. Protein can be used to grow or repair muscles and bones. It is found in animal products like meat, fish and eggs. Vegetarians get protein from foods like lentils, beans, soya and nuts.

Fat

Small amounts of fat are an important part of a healthy diet. Fat has many uses including providing energy and keeping cells healthy. It also helps the body absorb useful vitamins and minerals. However, not all fats are the same. Unsaturated fats are often called 'healthy fats'. They are found in vegetable oils, nuts and seeds and avocados. Saturated fats on the other hand are found in fatty meat, butter, cheese, biscuit and cakes. These fats can cause health problems and should mainly be eaten as treats.

Vitamins

There are many different types of vitamins and they each have a vital job. For example, vitamin C which is found in citrus fruits and green leafy vegetables, helps the body fight infection and looks after skin, teeth and gums. Vitamin A, from oily fish, eggs and some vegetables, is needed to help with eyesight. Fruits and vegetables are rich sources of



vitamins and that is why we should aim for at least five portions a day. These portions should ideally all be different types. Some people suggest 'eating the rainbow'! If we try to eat lots of different colours of fruit and vegetable, we will be making sure our bodies get lots of different vitamins.

Minerals

Like vitamins, there are many different types of minerals. Calcium is one especially important one because it helps keep our bones strong. Eating dairy products, tofu, sardines, almonds or green leafy vegetables will help you get the calcium you need. Iron is the mineral which helps our red blood cells carry oxygen around the body. It is found in red meat, beans and nuts.

Water

Finally, a healthy diet needs water. It helps with digestion so that the body can use all of the other nutrients and get rid of waste. It transports oxygen and nutrients around the body and it is needed for every single cell. We can get water from our food and drink. However, the cheapest and healthiest way of making sure you have enough water is by drinking, you guessed it, fresh water!

RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. How much carbohydrate are people advised to eat?
2. Which nutrient helps the body grow and repair?
3. Give one source of unsaturated fat.
4. What is meant by the phrase 'eating a rainbow'?
5. What vitamin helps with vision?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

V

What word or phrase could replace 'extracts' in the first paragraph?

I

What evidence is there in the text to suggest that people should be careful when eating fatty foods.

V

Find and copy a word which means 'important'.

S

Looking at the whole text, what important nutrients are provided by nuts?

S

Using the information in the text, design a plate of food which would contribute towards a balanced diet.