

Healthier eating habits – from the store to your plate

Social media examples

We're focusing on healthy eating with valuable tips from our Vitality nutrition experts 💡 First up? Chew more and eat slower. Discover how this simple change can benefit your health: [link to article](#)
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Today's healthy eating tip? Start with your greens 🥬 This ensures you eat them all, while you're at your hungriest. Plus, research suggests eating vegetables first benefits blood sugar levels: [link to article](#)
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YOUR HEALTH CHALLENGE FOR THE MONTH:

Choose some of our healthy eating tips 🥗 to try this month ... and get ready to enjoy all the benefits: [link to article](#)
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According to Harvard Health, the more you cook at home 🔍 the healthier your diet, the fewer calories you consume, and the less likely you are to be obese or develop type 2 diabetes. Need some help to get started? Coming right up: [link to article](#)
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Having a plan helps lead us to success. This applies to most things in life – and healthy eating is no different. Your plan here? A shopping list 📋 Studies show that grocery lists help us make healthier choices and even save us money! [Link to article](#)
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Article

The perks of healthy eating are many: you'll feel better, look better, enjoy a more energised life and even protect yourself against the risk of chronic diseases ranging from diabetes to some cancers. And the good news is that with a few small swaps and new choices, you can start to make your diet slightly healthier over time.

As part of our focus on better nutrition, we asked our Vitality health experts for quick (and easy) eating recommendations.

Their challenge?

Choose one or two of these tips to try this month and enjoy the benefits.

1) Start with a shopping list

Having a plan helps lead us to success. This applies to most things in life – and healthy eating is no different. Your plan here? A shopping list. You've probably heard that you should never go grocery shopping hungry (too much temptation to buy unhealthy, snacky foods!). A key tip from our experts is to make sure you go with a shopping list that you check off as you're shopping. If you don't have a set plan, you're more likely to impulse buy – either food that you don't end up using and goes to waste or low-nutrient food that's best to avoid. The best strategy is to plan your meals – and the ingredients needed – in advance. In fact, studies show that grocery lists may help you make healthier choices while shopping. An added bonus is that this strategy helps you to save money, too. if

you're new to the world of meal prepping, start slowly. Try to prepare just a few meals the first week and set that as your goal.

2) Cook at home (most nights)

According to Harvard Health, the more you cook at home, the healthier your diet, the fewer calories you consume, and the less likely you are to be obese or develop type 2 diabetes. Like all healthy habits, it takes time to make cooking at home part of your day-to-day routine. The first step here is to make sure you've got the right ingredients to prepare healthy meals. Nothing derails home cooking more than not having the right ingredients – and equipment. Stock up on non-perishable or frozen foods so that you're always able to whip up an easy, nutritious meal or snack – even when you're out of fresh foods. Cooking at home is especially important if you have children. Without realising it, you start to teach them healthy eating habits which can help them to form lifelong habits of their own. After all, who doesn't appreciate a good home-cooked meal? Another benefit to home cooking is that it's better for the planet: less wastage, less spoilage and more local produce which means a reduced carbon emission.

3) Try out a new recipe (it's fun!)

So. You've decided to cook more at home. Now what? Our Vitality experts recommend trying out a fun, new recipe. Pick one of our [seasonal Vitality recipes here](#), get all the necessary ingredients, and recruit a friend or family member to play sous-chef in the kitchen. Put on some music or your favourite podcast and enjoy the process. If you have busy weekdays, do your prep like cutting, slicing, dicing and marinating over the weekend, and then on cooking day, you'll be all set. Involving children in the process is a great idea, too. This allows you to start conversations about food and nutrition choices with your kids, so they learn how to make better nutrition decisions early on. A fun game to play is recipe roulette. Here, you have a few recipes you're keen to try that you pick out from a hat or have someone else select for you. Bringing fun into the kitchen makes it more likely that you'll enjoy the cooking process and want to repeat it – key to building a habit.



Cucumber, avocado and almond gazpachc



Baked broccoli falafel with harissa.pdf



Seared salmon with radish, celery, sesameand



Italian-style quinoa vegetable soup.pdf



Flourless banana and oat crumpets.pdf

4) Try a smaller plate

The bubbling, boiling, grilling, roasting, simmering is all done and your food is ready to be served. Next: pick your plate. Did you know that the size of your bowl or dinner plate can influence how much food you eat? Many researchers have tested this theory and seen similar results. When you use a bigger plate, you're more likely to 'fill the space' and serve a bigger portion. This cues our brains to eat more than we need to, and our brain even takes longer to send us those important "you're already full" signals. Eating from a smaller plate or bowl makes the amount of food you serve look bigger, and helps to increase our feelings of satiety (feeling full). This is a great tweak to immediately help you control portion sizes, even when you know you're doing it!

5) Start with your greens

You've dished up and ready to eat. Now, where to start? Our experts all agree: start with your greens. This ensures you eat them all, as a starter, while you're at your hungriest. It'll mean you're less likely to bulk up on the (perhaps) less nutritious elements of your meal like carbohydrates so you'll likely eat fewer calories. There is also research that suggests

eating vegetables first benefits your blood sugar levels. How this works is that it slows how quickly the next part of your meal is absorbed into the blood stream, benefiting our short and long-term blood sugar control.

6) Chew more; eat slower

Digestion starts in the mouth. This means that by chewing more, you let your teeth and saliva do the all-important work to use enzymes to start breaking down the food you're eating. This puts less strain on your stomach, helping to reduce bloating, colon complications, and balance your gut bacteria better. Chewing slower and reducing the speed at which you eat also gives your brain enough time (around 20 minutes) to send the right cues as you get full. Studies show that fast eaters are more likely to eat more and have higher BMIs than slow eaters. Tips here are to create a distraction-free dining environment (turn off that TV!), put your cutlery down every so often to savour your meal, and even purposefully mimic a slow eater until this behaviour becomes more routine.

7) After the meal

Mealtime is now over and you've stacked the plates and cleared the table. Next: take a 10-minute walk. This helps to improve blood sugar levels, adds some much-needed movement to your day and helps with digestion. While you're at it, drink a glass of water which keeps food moving through your digestive system and helps with forming good gut bacteria. Give yourself some positive self-talk now too: because you did it, and you're another step closer to making these healthy actions long-term habits.

Completely changing how you shop, cook and eat can be intimidating. Instead, our Vitality experts recommend starting small with a few easy steps to incorporate some of the healthy tips above to gradually improve your relationship with food. From meal prepping and having fun in the kitchen to portion control and managing how much you eat; these tips go a long way in creating a big impact on your overall health and wellbeing.

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