



Healthy Eating for Weight Loss: Sarah's Top Ten Tips

Nutrition can be very confusing and daunting at times, especially when you turn on the television or look on the internet. There are several conflicting opinions, new fad diets and “magical weight loss techniques” out there. Nutrition is a science that is complex and ever-changing. Everybody is different and what works for one person doesn't necessarily work for someone else. To be healthy and to promote a healthy weight, a diet should be lower in fat, moderate in protein and carbohydrate, and high in fibre. It should also satisfy you without relying on huge portions or high fat, high calorie snack foods.

Here is Sarah's **Top Ten Tips** for healthy weight loss:

1. **Start the day off right- ALWAYS eat breakfast!** Breakfast is by far the most important meal of the day. Think of your body as a car. Cars need fuel to run and function properly- so does your body! If you skip breakfast, you will most likely feel fatigued and lack energy all day, you will likely burn fewer calories during the day, and you will probably end up eating more later in the day. Kick start your metabolism with a healthy balanced breakfast within an hour of waking up. Try to include a whole grain, a fruit or vegetable and a source of protein. If you are not used to having breakfast at all, start with something small like a piece of fruit or a glass of milk.
2. **Say Goodbye to Fad Diets- say hello to a lifelong change:** Say goodbye to quick fix diets and dieting altogether. Instead think permanent, realistic lifelong changes in your eating habits. A diet is a short-term process often accompanied by feelings of deprivation and hunger and often setting you up for failure and further weight gain. People who go on "diets" often end up thinking about food all the time and bingeing. Don't forget- weight loss and weight maintenance is one and the same; to keep those unwanted pounds off you must make permanent changes to your diet and lifestyle.
3. **Don't plan to change everything all at once- set realistic goals:** People often start with a bang but soon lose momentum a few weeks later. Set a steady realistic weight loss goal of 1-2 pounds a week. Make one change to your diet each week. Small changes add up and can have a big impact. Some examples are:
 - a. Drinking 1% instead of 2% milk.
 - b. Trimming skin from chicken and excess fat from meat.
 - c. Having fruit for dessert instead of cake or cookies.
 - d. Substituting after dinner snacks with a mug of tea, steamed milk or light hot chocolate – it takes longer to drink a hot beverage than it does to eat a handful of cookies, and it fills your stomach better.

Sarah Remmer, RD **Phone:** (403)389-3284 **Fax:** (403)455-7981

E-mail: info@nutrioconsulting.ca **Web:** www.nutrioconsulting.ca

4. **Drink plenty of water throughout the day:** Not only does fluid keep you well hydrated, it also fills your stomach, leaving you less likely to overindulge. As you start exercising more, make sure to add water to replace water lost through sweat.
5. **Eat more soluble fibre:** This fibre forms a gel in your stomach and makes you feel fuller. Foods such as oatmeal, barley, beans, lentils, apples and ground flaxseed are good choices. All-Bran Buds and Fibre One Cereal contain a soluble fibre called Psyllium Fibre. When you increase the fibre in your diet, do it gradually and make sure to also increase your water!
6. **Try small frequent meals:** Don't go longer than 5 waking hours without eating. A healthy mid day snack containing a bit of protein and carbohydrate will boost your energy levels, help prevent a sugar craving and can take the edge off your appetite before your next meal. Good snack choices are low-fat yogurt, milk, a piece of fruit, a small homemade smoothie, or some hummus and raw veggies.
7. **Cut the fat (but don't be fooled by fat-free products!):** Cut back on the fat. Considering that you get twice as many calories per gram from fat than you do from protein and carbohydrate, cutting back can have a big impact. Trim excess fat from meats and choose leaner cuts. Bake, broil or poach instead of frying. Try switching to skim milk. Have sweets and fatty snacks like chips once in a while only. Watch out though...Don't be fooled by low fat and fat free products. Check labels carefully as many reduced fat snack foods are similar in calories to the regular fat version. If you've really got to have it, consider choosing a smaller amount of the real thing. Studies show that people tend to overeat on fat-free foods compared to the regular fat version. Portion control is the key.
8. **Keep a food diary:** This may be one of the most powerful weight loss tools around. When you write it all down, you're more likely to make healthy food choices. Studies show that people who keep track of their food intake tend to lose weight, even when they were not intending to. Seeing that you've had leftover birthday cake 4 days in a row down on paper will be very hard to ignore. You'll also rethink that spoonful of icecream before supper when you have to write it down. A food diary will also remind you of what you might be lacking – you may see that you aren't eating as enough servings of vegetables and fruit or that you aren't drinking enough water.
9. **Don't forget to Exercise:** Exercise boosts your self-esteem, burns calories, and increases the rate at which your body burns calories.
10. **Surround yourself with support:** Seek support from those around you -- a spouse, a friend, or a co-worker. Whether you need a walking buddy, motivating comments from friends, or your spouse to stop bringing high fat treats into the house, helps you keep on track.