

VeraVia 

Nutrition to Fuel a Healthy Lifestyle

Expert tips from our nutrition pro to help you feel well and be well.



Healthy weight loss requires taking a holistic look at your overall health and paying attention to the vital role that nutrition plays in reaching your wellness goals. Our health and wellness experts believe in an inside-out approach: the healthier you are inside, the more it shows on the outside. That is, weight loss simply is a side effect of elevating your overall health. In *Nutrition Tips to Fuel a Healthy Lifestyle*, we share tips on how to reframe your view of nutrition, what healthful foods you should be adding in your diet, and share ideas for treats that are still in line with a healthy lifestyle.





A Different Look at Nutrition

During each retreat, we spend a lot of time examining the ways nutritional choices affect weight loss. We find that no matter how many hours spent at the gym, many people inadvertently undermine their weight loss goals by making nutrition choices that don't support their health. Then they're understandably confused when they don't see results.

It's time to take a different look at nutrition, one that shifts the focus away from caloric intake toward an integrated understanding of the role nutrition plays in your life and how it supports your weight loss journey.



Better Food, Not Less

The quality of your food is the starting point for every aspect of your health. It's the fuel your body needs to run efficiently. Low quality food choices might not create immediate damage but gradually erode your overall wellness. High blood pressure, gastrointestinal difficulties, problems sleeping, low energy and arterial obstructions are just a few of the side effects of sustained poor nutrition.

Help your body's detoxification process by providing it with high quality nutrient-rich fresh foods. Balance these with your macronutrient intake (things like fats, proteins, and carbs) to achieve optimal blood sugar regulation.

Get Educated

With so many fad diets and nutritional philosophies floating around it's hard to separate the wheat from the chaff, so to speak. Meanwhile, packaged foods companies and fast food chains offer an endless barrage of "eat-this-now!" messaging designed to put food in your belly without putting nutrients in your body. Most people simply have no idea what to eat. Your personal character is not about the mistakes you make, it's about what you DO in response to those slip-ups. If you miss a workout, make sure you go the next day. If you eat a high-fat dinner, go right back to your healthy diet with the next meal. The pride of resisting defeat far outweighs the guilt of a single mistake. Give yourself a break and jump right back into your health-conscious lifestyle.



A professional nutritionist is more than a meal-planner. They will share their extensive knowledge about how your unique metabolism processes food and can help you identify foods to support healthy weight loss that satisfy your tastes. We recommend working with a holistic nutritionist to develop a healthy eating plan that works best for you.

Love What You Eat

Quality nutrition isn't just about what you eat; it's about how you eat. Slow down and take the time to appreciate your food—both during preparation and as you consume it. Choose organic, locally grown foods free from pesticides and harmful chemicals. Stop scarfing down frozen and microwaved foods in a hurry. Relax and take the time to enjoy the role of nutritious foods in your diet.

Be Patient & Realistic

Your transition to healthier eating does not have to happen overnight. Making better choices to promote healthy weight loss is not a one-off decision. It's an ongoing commitment to replace unhealthy choices with better alternatives. Start swapping out foods with healthier options and discover which ones you really like.



Healthy Foods You Should Be Eating

It's time to get excited about eating again. Stop reaching for the same old go-to's in your pantry. Mix things up a bit in the kitchen with these easy-to-find nutritious foods that promote healthy weight loss. Give your diet an extra kick and inject your meals with a jolt of excitement.



Watercress

Move over kale. Watercress is about to steal your thunder! Watercress is known to be an exceptional source of the known-antioxidants vitamin A and C. It is also an excellent source of vitamin K, critical to bone health, and the richest dietary source of PEITC (phenylethyl isothiocyanate), which research suggests can fight cancer. Results from an eight-week trial published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition suggest daily supplementation of 2 cups of raw watercress could reduce DNA damage linked to cancer by 17%. Exposure to heat may inactivate PEITC, so it's best to enjoy watercress raw in salads, gluten-free wraps and sandwiches, cold-pressed juices, or as a pesto.

Wild Caught Fish

Studies report anti-inflammatory, omega 3 rich fish like salmon, sardines and mackerel, to be correlated with better brain, hormonal and nervous system health, as well as cardiovascular disease and cancer prevention.

The standard American diet (SAD) has an unbalanced ratio of omega 3 to omega 6 and in favor of omega 6. Processed food, fast food, some vegetable oils, commercial salad dressings, mayonnaise, as well as conventional (non-organic/non pasture raised) beef, chicken and eggs are all rich in inflammatory omega 6. The fewer inflammatory omega 6s you eat, the more the omega 3s you eat will be able to build and strengthen your body.



Lentils

Forget plain old beans and bring on the lentil party! The high levels of soluble fiber found in lentils can play an important role in lowering your cholesterol. They're especially useful in managing blood sugar disorders since their high fiber content prevents rises in blood sugar after eating. Lentils provide important minerals, Bvitamins and protein. Lentils need no soaking and can quickly be simmered and transformed into spectacular salads, stews and blended to make dips. Lentils are especially tasty with anti-oxidant rich herbs and spices and especially tasty with Greek yogurt and fresh mint.

Avocados

These pitted wonder-fruits are full of monounsaturated fat, which is easily burned for energy. Some research has suggested that avocados assist in lowering cholesterol in certain individuals. Like the other foods mentioned here, avocados are packed with fiber, which has been proven to support healthy weight loss and can regulate blood sugar levels. Avocado itself has a mild flavor that you can consume on its own, in guacamole or avocado slices. Or, you can blend avocado to make desserts and smoothies, and to add a creamy kick without relying on dairy.



Blueberries

Pop them in your smoothies, sprinkle them on your cereal or just snack on them individually. No matter how you get your blueberry fix, you're receiving the benefits of these anti-oxidant-packed natural snacks. Anti-oxidants benefit your body in incredibly important ways, including providing protection against heart disease, cancer and memory loss. Blueberries also promote urinary health, protecting against UTIs.

Sweet Potatoes

Orange flesh sweet potatoes are one of nature's best sources of the anti-oxidant beta carotene, a precursor of vitamin A. Vitamin A plays a role in maintaining healthy vision, neurological function, healthy skin, and more. Vitamin A and all other antioxidants are involved in fighting inflammation by reducing free radical damage. The delicious purple fleshed sweet potato contain a phytochemical called anthocyanin which benefit brain and nerve tissue. As with all vegetables, you'll need to eat them with a source of healthy fat, like olive oil, coconut oil or grass fed butter, so your body can absorb the wonderful array of fat soluble vitamins, minerals, anti-oxidants and phytochemicals.



Nuts and Seeds

Chia, hemp and flax seeds are some of the most nutrient dense seeds in the world. They provide essential fatty acids, minerals and a great dose of fiber. Sesame, pumpkin and sunflower seeds are also beneficial and full of healthy fatty acids as are walnuts, almonds and Brazil nuts. The best health benefits come from sprouting nuts and seeds which lend a great boost to smoothies, salads, plain yogurt and non-dairy parfaits. loss becomes a little more exciting.

Fuel Your Body The Right Way

It's important to fuel your body with nutritious foods. Choose organic options as often as possible and try to get your hands on locally grown produce whenever you can. Losing weight takes time. But when you select the right foods as your foundation, the journey toward healthy weight loss becomes a little more exciting.



Healthy Treats You'll Love

Just because you're trying to lose weight, doesn't mean that you have to give up your sweet tooth. There are lots of delicious, easy to make sweet treats that fit right in with your healthy weight loss plan. Here are five favorite sweet and healthy treats that you can feel good about.



Homemade Vegan Ice Cream

Ditch the store-bought variety and leave the extra sugar and preservatives in the freezer aisle. Homemade ice cream is smarter for healthy weight loss because you have greater control over the ingredients you use. Affordable ice cream makers have taken over the market. DIY ice cream no longer requires packing your product in pounds of salt and sitting down for hours of churning. With the press of a button, you can generate your own healthy ice cream or sorbet in under an hour. Replace dairy with coconut milk and use honey, stevia, maple or yacon syrup as a sweetener in place of sugar. Get creative and experiment with fun flavors like lavender pear, mango mint, coffee coconut, pumpkin spice or banana cardamom.



Healthy Chocolate Mousse

Chocolate mousse is perfect for special occasions. Replace heavy cream with coconut milk and a large ripe avocado without sacrificing the mousse's creamy texture. Using raw cocoa powder helps you get those dark chocolate antioxidant benefits, and coconut milk or almond milk is easier on your digestive tract. Swap out sugar with stevia and top with toasted almonds, toasted coconut or frozen berries.



Nut (or Seed) Butter & Granola Balls

These bite-sized snacks combine creamy peanut butter with a jolt of crunch for a satisfying afternoon pick-me-up or an after-dinner treat. Homemade granola is very easy to make—choose your favorite recipe and be sure to use maple syrup, honey or yacon in place of brown or white sugar. Add your favorite nuts and dried fruits and feel free to munch while you're preparing your peanut butter balls.

To make the PB&G Balls:

- Combine 4 tablespoons of almond butter, peanut butter, sunflower or sesame butter (smooth works best) with 2 tablespoons of maple syrup, honey or yacon and a splash of coconut or almond milk (about 2 tablespoons).
- Stir in about 4 cups of your prepared granola.
- Using wet hands, spoon out chunks of the nut or seed butter-granola mixture, molding it into 1" balls.
- Drizzle more coconut milk into your mixing bowl if your mixture gets too sticky, and continue to wet your hands with milk or water if you have trouble forming the balls.
- Place your balls on a parchment-covered plate and refrigerate for at least an hour before enjoying.



Dark Chocolate Covered Strawberries

Chocolate covered strawberries are not only delicious, they're impressive. But here's the secret: they're actually quite easy to make. As a bonus, dark chocolate has antioxidant properties that can help protect against heart disease.

To prepare your chocolate covered strawberries:

- Buy a basket of organic strawberries and a bag of dark chocolate chips—look for over 70%-80% cacao.
- Wash the strawberries, keeping the stems intact, then dry each one thoroughly.
- Using a double-boiler, heat up a cup of chocolate chips, stirring frequently and keeping an eye on the chocolate's consistency.
- When the chocolate is melted and smooth, carefully grab a strawberry by its stem and dip it into the chocolate, rolling it from side to side to achieve your desired coverage.
- Set the strawberry on a plate or baking sheet covered with parchment or wax paper.
- When you have finished dipping your strawberries, place them in the refrigerator for at least an hour before digging in.

Tip: Over-heated chocolate can become clumpy, so keep your heat as low as possible and add more chocolate chips as needed.



Greek Yogurt Parfait

Yogurt isn't just for breakfast anymore. Skip the fruit flavors and go for the basics: plain, full fat or low fat Greek yogurt. Not only is Greek yogurt an excellent source of calcium, potassium, and vitamins B12 and B6, plain Greek yogurt contains probiotics and contains about double the protein of other yogurts.

Don't worry about this treat getting boring:

Do as the Greeks do and add a drizzle of honey. Then top with your favorite fruit (we love blackberries, blueberries, raspberries or bananas) and sprinkle on a handful of homemade granola for some crunch.

There's no need to give up sweets on your path to healthy weight loss. Get creative and seek out alternative recipes that don't rely as much on sugar or fat as traditional desserts. As with everything sweet, remember to enjoy in moderation.

Do you need help building the ideal nutrition plan to meet your goals? Contact us at (800) 527-1936 and schedule your stay at our wellness retreat, where our nutritionist will help you develop a healthy meal plan that boosts your energy and heals your body.



Claim the wonderfully healthy and happy life you know you deserve. Visit veraviafit.com to learn more.

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