

## Give Your Diet a Nutritional Tuneup

Between spending long days at work and evenings and weekends attending to personal and family concerns, few Americans have time to eat right. But you don't have to remodel your diet to improve its healthfulness.

"There are easy and delicious ways to regularly add healthful foods to your diet," says Evelyn Tribole, M.S., R.D., dietitian and author of several nutrition books, including "Intuitive Eating."

Ms. Tribole suggests the following tips for tuning up your diet.

### Fruits and vegetables

Eating five to thirteen servings (or 2½ to 6½ cups) of fruits and vegetables each day can help you prevent cancer, heart disease and other health problems.

To sneak more fruits and vegetables into your diet:

- Add finely grated carrots to spaghetti sauce. Carrots are loaded with beta carotene, an antioxidant. You can also add kale or spinach to the sauce.
- Fortify your salad. "A salad is a great place to add other vegetables," says Ms. Tribole. Top Boston lettuce with chopped bell peppers, onions, carrots and tomatoes. Remember that what goes into a salad depends on your taste. Some suggestions are jalapeno peppers, baby green peas, cauliflower, thinly slice purple cabbage, onion, cucumber, beans, sprouts (barley, bean, radish), mushrooms, oriental vegetables and other exotic vegetables. In addition some fruits make great additions for a slightly sweeter flavor. Raspberries, blueberries, Mandarin orange, mango, papaya and Kiwi make flavorful and nutritious additions. Remember to use a fat-free or low fat dressing.

### Low-fat dairy products

Low-fat dairy products are high in calcium, which helps prevent bone-weakening osteoporosis.

To sneak in at least three servings of calcium-rich foods a day:

- Switch to skinny lattes (2/3 skim milk to 1/3 strong coffee) instead of regular coffee.
- Drink calcium-fortified orange juice instead of the regular kind. You'll get as much calcium as if you drank a glass of milk.
- Cook oatmeal and other hot cereals with low-fat milk instead of water.
- Choose yogurt for a snack.

### Iron

Iron deficiency can be caused by too little iron in your diet. (Other reasons for iron deficiency are inadequate absorption of iron and excessive blood loss.) Because iron helps carry oxygen to the blood and deliver it to cells, you may feel sluggish and fatigued without enough of it. Women of childbearing age (especially those who have heavy menstrual periods), pregnant women, preterm and low-birth-weight infants, older infants and toddlers, and teenage girls are at greatest risk for developing iron deficiency anemia because they have the greatest need for iron. For these people, iron supplements may be necessary to prevent iron deficiency anemia.

To add more iron to your diet, include red meats, fish and poultry. Plant foods such as lentils and beans and iron-enriched and iron-fortified foods are also common sources of dietary iron.

### Fiber

A high-fiber diet reduces the risk of heart disease.

To sneak more fiber into your diet:

- Toss beans into salads and soups.



- Try hummus, black-bean or pinto-bean dip with crudites and chips.
- Sprinkle wheat germ on yogurt or into a cobbler or a crust.
- Serve brown rice or wild rice instead of white rice.
- Buy bread and crackers with "whole wheat" listed as the first ingredient. "If the label just says 'wheat,' the product probably contains white flour, which is low in fiber," says Ms. Tribble.

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