

# Nutrition in a Nutshell

Want to know some nutrition facts in a nutshell? Here are 10 basics that will help you get a handle on proper eating:

1. Know the basics of nutrition: There are three food groups (carbohydrates, protein, and fat). All foods fall into one of these groups.
2. Carbohydrates:
  - Primary source of energy
  - Needed for brain function
  - Simple carbohydrates are short chain sugars
  - Complex carbohydrates are long chain sugars
  - All carbohydrates are sugar
  - All carbohydrates illicit an insulin response
  - Different carbohydrates digest at different rates
  - All carbohydrates are approximately 4 calories per gram
3. Best carbohydrate choices:
  - Non-processed foods!
  - Fruits and vegetables
  - Whole grain breads/cereals/pasta/rice (starchy carbohydrates)
4. The Big Secret to a Healthy Weight: The Role of Insulin:
  - Insulin is a powerful hormone
  - Carbohydrates elevate blood sugar
  - Insulin is released to lower blood sugar.
  - Insulin enables the body to use carbohydrates 3 ways:
    - as an immediate energy source
    - stored in muscle as glycogen
    - stored as body fat
  - Avoid insulin spikes
  - Insulin is fat sparing, or it will allow you to hold onto your fat while burning other sources of energy first
5. Protein:
  - Building blocks for the body
  - Composed of amino acids
  - There are 8 essential amino acids & 11 non-essential amino acids
  - Complete proteins contain all 8 essential amino acids
  - Food source proteins take approximately two hours to digest

- All sources are 4 calories per gram

6. Good Protein Choices:

- Chicken breast
- Turkey breast
- Fish (lean and oily)
- Shell fish
- Lean red meat
- Buffalo
- Lean ham
- Egg whites
- Low-fat cottage cheese
- Protein supplements
- Dairy products such as skim milk
- Soy milk

7. Fats:

- Fats are the most misunderstood macro-nutrient.
- There are certain fats which are essential to the diet.
- ESSENTIAL SOURCES
  - - Flax oil
  - - Olive oil
  - - Fish oil
- SELECT MODERATELY
  - - Vegetable oils
  - - Nuts
  - - Margarine
  - - Egg yolks
- AVOID
  - - Animal fat (saturated fats)
  - - Milk fat
  - - Palm oil
  - - ALL trans-fats
  - - Lard / shortening
  - - Fried foods

8. What does this mean to me?

- Do NOT starve yourself!
- Eat 5-6 smaller meals daily.
- Include PROTEIN and FAT with every meal.

9. The HAND METHOD – You have a handy and personalized measuring utensil at the end of each arm! It is just the right size for you alone. A guideline for meals can be the following:

- Protein serving: the size of your palm
- Fat serving: the size of the tip of your thumb
- Carbohydrate serving for fruits or breads/cereals (starchy carbohydrates): the size of what would fit in one open hand
- Carbohydrate serving of vegetables: the size of what would fit in both open hands
- Junk food? Clench your fists and try not to grab onto any of it on a regular basis!

10. Good nutrition and proper exercise lead to a healthy weight. TOGETHER they are the key to feeling and looking great.

By Shawna Kaminski

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