

Nutrition Times

April 2024 Nutrition Services

Healthy Relationship with Food

Have you ever stopped and wondered what a healthy relationship with food is? Or why we might even focus on our 'relationship' with food? Like other relationships, it can be different for everyone and even change and grow with us, ever evolving. Our relationship with food includes how we think about, talk about, and enjoy food.

Our relationship with food ..

Our relationship with food goes beyond just the need to eat or the health benefits of what we are eating. It includes enjoying the taste of foods, and the social, traditional and cultural aspects of food and sharing meals. It includes mindfulness around eating, like being aware of how, why, and where you eat, and listening to your body signals for hunger and fullness cues. Food is more than just 'fuel', or energy and nutrients, it's also nourishment and enjoyment. We know that eating changes based on appetite, emotions, routines, and many other factors, and your relationship with food is something that can take all of that into account. All foods fit! Foods can be welcomed into our diets without fear or guilt.

Why is a Healthy Relationship with Food Important?

Health and nutrition are for every 'body,' regardless of shape or size, and everyone deserves to have a healthy relationship with food – from young children to older adults! Framing nutrition in a positive and non-judgmental way creates inclusive environments that can embrace diversity.

How does it all start?

With our words! The language we use and the way we think about health, food and nutrition matters." It impacts everyone. It can also be especially important to mind our words around young people. This is because we begin to develop our relationships with food from early ages. See the next page for examples on how to have neutral conversations about food and nutrition. A 'Words matter!' Video series is available that goes more in depth about healthy relationships with food, diets, disordered eating, weight, body image and more. Find it [here](#).



Other Tips:

- Choose a variety of foods and flavours you enjoy
- Avoid describing food as 'good' or 'bad' or 'healthy' and 'unhealthy'
- Try calling food by its name, rather than calling it something like 'junkfood'
- Try describing food by its sensory aspects (like flavour and texture; e.g. savoury, chewy)
- Save nutrition talk for when food is absent, mealtimes are best for socializing

Here are some examples of language to use if talking about food:	
Try saying this:	Instead of this:
Drinking water keeps you hydrated so you can think and work.	Don't drink juice or pop, they are bad for you.
Eat what you like from your lunch and stop when you feel comfortably full.	Finish your whole lunch first.
Eat your foods in whatever way you like.	You need to eat your sandwich before you have your brownie.
I like that apples taste so juicy, crisp and sweet.	Snacking isn't good. If you do snack, you should only snack on foods like fruits and vegetables that are good for you.
Eating a variety of foods can help fuel your body and your brain.	I don't eat a lot of pasta or bread because I don't want to gain weight.
If you do this first, you can take a five minute break after.	If you do this first, you can have a chocolate after.

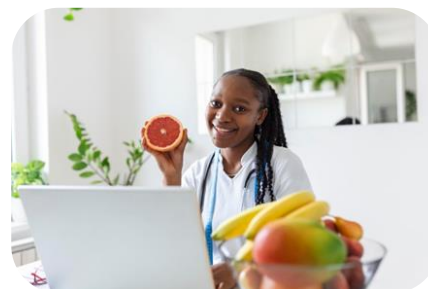
To learn more, check out these additional resources:

- [Explore Your Relationship with Food](#)
- [Teaching and Talking to Students About Food and Nutrition](#)
- [A healthy relationship with food: How you can support your child](#)
- [A healthy relationship with food: What it means for your teen](#)

Upcoming Events & Classes

We offer classes on a variety of nutrition topics including:

- Prenatal nutrition
- Infant nutrition
- Toddler nutrition
- Professional development for childcare educators
- And more [here!](#)



For additional information, including registration details click [here](#).

Contact

If you have questions, contact your local Registered Dietitian at Community Health Services:

Medicine Hat	403-502-8200
Brooks	403-501-3300
Lethbridge	403-388-6666

For more information on this or other nutrition topics, go to www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca

