

BETter Living ...

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Keys to Embracing Aging – Eating Smart

“Food Glorious Food” is a song that opens the musical Oliver. I recently saw the production at the Columbian Theatre. We are surrounded by food each day. It gives us nourishment to continue to live our life. On an average day, most people eat three meals. That is how we have been raised for decades. Eating Smart will be the second of twelve keys that we will explore. Food is a major contributor to our overall health.

MyPlate Tips:

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
- Make the other half of your plate grains and protein
- Make at least half your grains whole-grains
- Try lean meats, skinless poultry, fish beans, eggs, and nuts
- Choose low-fat or fat-free milk and dairy products
- Enjoy limited amounts of fats, cholesterol, sodium, and added sugars

A well-balanced breakfast:

- provides you with energy and increases physical activity during the day
- gets your metabolism started for the day and keeps it active throughout the morning
- reduces hunger later in the day and prevents you from overeating
- positively affects mood, patience, and cognitive performance

Reduce daily sodium intake by following these tips:

- Keep the salt shaker off the dinner table.
- Choose foods that have “low sodium,” “reduced sodium,” or “sodium free” labels.
- When eating out, ask for low-sodium dishes or ask for no salt to be added.
- Enjoy home-cooked meals so you can control the amount of salt.
- When cooking, replace salt with other heart-healthy herbs and spices such as cinnamon, cumin, turmeric, cayenne, oregano, ginger, thyme, and rosemary or add a splash of fresh lemon juice.
- Pay attention to condiments such as soy sauce, ketchup, and seasoning packets, which can have excess sodium.

To reduce added sugar intake:

- eat fresh, or frozen fruits and vegetables
- avoid canned fruits in syrup, particularly heavy syrup
- limit candy, baked goods, and other sweet treats
- opt for water instead of sugary fruit drinks, sodas, and sweet teas
- limit processed foods, which are typically high in sugar, fat, and sodium
- enhance foods with spices instead of sugar

Water consumption is also very important in overall health. I encourage you to increase your water consumption throughout this next week by carrying a water bottle with you. Water helps every

system in your body. Many times, people will snack on a food item as they think they are hungry, but really they are thirsty. Thirst can mimic hunger.

Next time you are at the grocery store, make it your goal to fill up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of your cart with foods from the perimeter of the store. The perimeter is where you will find the most nutrient-dense foods that will benefit your body the best.

For more information, contact the Wabaunsee County Extension Office at 785-765-3821 or email Bernadette Trieb, btrieb@ksu.edu.