

# NUTRITION BEYOND CALORIES GUIDE



# UNDERSTANDING NUTRITION BEYOND CALORIES

Understanding nutrition is a complex task that goes beyond merely counting calories. It's about balanced consumption of diverse nutrients, each vital to enhancing and sustaining your health.

Fully appreciating the importance of all food groups and macronutrients in your diet will empower you with the knowledge to make simple yet effective changes. Understanding this will enable lifelong healthier choices to become instinctive, turning wellness into a way of life and a natural part of your daily routine.

This holistic approach to nutrition is much more beneficial and sustainable in the long run than temporary "quick-fix" solutions, which may provide immediate results but often fall short on long-term sustainability.

Considering the following macronutrients when planning your meals will help you to make them nutritionally balanced.



# PROTEIN

Proteins are the building blocks of life. They're essential for the growth and repair of tissues, the production of enzymes and hormones, and supporting your immune function. Protein will also help to keep you feeling full and satisfied. Enjoying a protein-rich breakfast is often the perfect place to start, giving you a practical and realistic starting point.

## BENEFITS OF INCLUDING ENOUGH PROTEIN WITH EVERY MEAL:

- Feel fuller for longer
- Increase muscle mass & strength
- Bone health
- Reduce cravings and late-night snacking
- Boosts metabolism
- Helps with burning calories throughout the day
- May help to lower blood pressure
- Recovery after workouts
- Recovery after injury
- May help prevent muscle loss with ageing & is particularly helpful during the perimenopause and menopause years.



# HEALTHY FATS

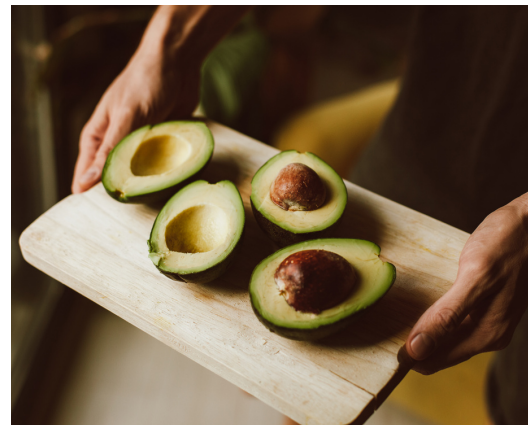
For many years, fats have been demonized and feared, with the common misconception that eating fats can lead to gaining weight. This has caused many people to shy away from enjoying fats in their diet.

However, it's crucial to understand that not all fats are equal. Healthy fats found in foods such as avocados, nuts, seeds, and fatty fish, are far from being our enemies. Instead, they serve integral roles in your health.

When eaten in moderation, they contribute to heart health, brain function, help regulate inflammation, and are essential for hormone production. It's time to move past the fat fear and understand that these healthy fats are vital for well-being. Including them in your meals and snacks leads to a balanced, nourishing diet supporting your overall health.

Eating healthy fats in moderation can have numerous health benefits, including:

- Lowering the risk of heart disease
- Hormone production
- Blood sugar control
- Reducing inflammation
- Improved cholesterol levels
- Supports gut health
- Brain health and function
- Bone health
- Baby's brain development in pregnancy



Healthy fats to consider including in your diet:

- Flax seeds
- Hemp seeds
- Fatty fish
- Walnuts
- Almonds
- Cashews
- Chia seeds



# CARBOHYDRATES

Carbohydrates have had nearly as bad a press as fats in recent years, but are also important nutrients. Carbohydrates come in different forms but can be categorized into simple and complex carbohydrates.

1. Simple carbohydrates. A quick energy source. These are found in foods like sugary drinks, cakes, and candy and are quickly absorbed into the bloodstream. This can cause a rapid increase in blood sugar levels, often followed by a sharp drop, leading to energy crashes and further cravings throughout the day.

Some simple carb foods include:

- Sugar
- High-fructose corn syrup
- Fruit juice concentrate
- Cakes and pastries
- Candy and sweets
- Ice cream



Including complex carbohydrates in your diet will offer a more balanced and sustainable approach to nutrition compared to the popular yet restrictive low-carb or no-carb diets. By selecting complex carbs, you're nourishing your body with a steady source of energy, fibre and a wealth of other beneficial nutrients.

Some complex carb foods include:

- Quinoa
- Brown rice
- Whole grain bread
- Oats
- Lentils
- Beans (such as black beans, kidney beans)
- Oatmeal
- Buckwheat
- Greens



# FIBER

Fiber is a nutrient that doesn't receive enough attention and plays a significant role in maintaining our health. Yet it needs to be more adequately consumed by many.

Its health benefits are extensive - it aids digestion, assists with weight management by enhancing satiety (fullness), and plays a crucial role in preventing conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and certain types of cancer. Good sources of fibre include whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes.

Aim to gently and gradually increase the amount of fibre in your diet. Avoid the temptation of increasing it too quickly, as this often leads to digestive issues like gas, bloating and even constipation if it's not something you're used to.

Instead, prioritize making minor, manageable adjustments to your meal planning, focusing on changes you can comfortably sustain over the long term.





Knowing where to start can be difficult so here are ten practical examples for you to consider:

- **Switch to whole grains:** Swap out white bread and pasta for whole grain versions. This simple switch can significantly increase your daily fibre intake.
- **Start with a high-fibre breakfast:** Opt for a fibre-rich breakfast, such as oatmeal topped with fruits or whole grain cereal.
- **Snack wisely:** Choose fibre-rich snacks like fresh fruits, vegetables, or a handful of nuts and seeds instead of chips or sweets.
- **Add legumes:** Not everyone's favourite, but try incorporating beans, lentils, or chickpeas into your salads, soups, or stews for a fibre boost. A bonus is their protein content!
- **Use whole fruits and vegetables:** Instead of juice, consume whole fruits and vegetables to retain the fibre.
- **Include more greens:** Add more leafy green vegetables to your meals. They can be added to sandwiches, stir-fries, or enjoyed as salads.
- **Choose brown rice:** Swap white rice with brown or wild rice, which is higher in fibre.
- **Use chia or flax seeds:** Sprinkle these on your breakfast cereal or yoghurt to increase your fibre intake. Alternatively, add them to your smoothies for fibre, protein and healthy fats.
- **Eat the skins:** As much as possible, eat fruits and vegetables with their skins intact. For instance, instead of peeling sweet potatoes before roasting, simply wash them and roast them with the skin on. There is a substantial amount of fibre within the skin.

**Experiment with new grains:** Add less common whole grains like bulgur, farro, or barley to your meals. It's always good to try something new, but choose one at a time instead of changing too much too soon.

## WATER INTAKE WHEN INCREASING FIBER

It's important to understand that as you increase your fiber intake, ensuring that you drink enough water is equally important. This is because fibre absorbs water in your digestive system, helping to improve regular bowel movements. Increasing fibre without sufficient hydration can lead to constipation rather than preventing it, which often confuses many.

As you adjust to a fiber-rich diet, you must complement this change by drinking enough water to help your digestive health and prevent potential adverse effects like gas, bloating and constipation.





# SUMMARY

Understanding nutrition is an intricate process beyond counting calories.

Comprehending the importance of all food groups and macronutrients in your diet provides you with the knowledge to implement straightforward yet impactful dietary changes. With this understanding, lifelong healthier choices can become an intuitive part of your daily routine.

Remember, your journey to optimal health and wellness is not a destination but a continuous process. The road may seem complex and sometimes challenging, but every step brings you closer to a healthier you.

This workbook has provided you with the foundational knowledge to make healthier choices and understand why these choices matter. However, know that you are not alone on this journey. If you ever need more assistance, have questions, or need further clarification on any of the topics covered, don't hesitate to reach out. I'm here to guide and support you every step of the way on your wellness journey.

Remember to be patient with yourself. Small, consistent changes often lead to sustainable, long-term results. Your journey towards better health and well-being starts here and now.