



Nutrition Nibbles

What to Eat?

One of the most common questions my clients ask is: "What should I eat?" The answer is simple...food! I am a big proponent of nourishing our bodies with wholesome, real, minimally processed foods. You want to take in enough energy to balance the calories you are burning. To help guide your choices and portions, check out the new model that has replaced the food guide pyramid: [Choose My Plate](#).

As a registered dietitian, I love the plate model and have been using it for years as a straight-forward and easy guide to a healthy, well-balanced, and well-proportioned diet.

• **Half your plate is filled with produce:** Fruits and vegetables are very low in calories but high in filling, satisfying fiber, with plenty of vitamins and minerals to boot. Try to incorporate several kinds and colors of produce into your meals throughout the day.

• **One quarter of your plate should be filled with lean protein:** Protein provides the long-term satisfaction factor of your meal. For a list of lean protein choices, click [here](#).

• **One quarter of your plate is for the starchy foods or grains:** Choose whole grain varieties whenever possible. They pack in more fiber, iron, and B vitamins – more nutrition for your money! Burnt out on brown rice and whole wheat bread? Check out some other whole

grain options at this [link](#).

• **Don't forget your calcium-rich foods!** The plate model reminds us to fit in at least 2 servings of low-fat (1%) or non-fat dairy daily. Rich in bone-building calcium and phosphorus, along with protein, milk, yogurt, cheese, and soy milk will round out your healthy diet.

• **Re-think your treat options.** Desserts and snack foods (chips and salty munchies) are packed with calories and offer little nutrition. Don't deprive yourself completely but be smart about how often you're eating these foods.

• **When cooking with fats and oils opt for heart-healthy olive or canola oil** more often and think of portions: a little dab will do ya!

• **Water is the best beverage for quenching your thirst without calories.**

To make the healthy plate model a reality in your life, I encourage you to visit the grocery store and farmers' market weekly. Spend some time in your kitchen interacting with ingredients and discovering new recipes. To your health!

College Corner: Caffeine in Your Daily Cup By Erika Chan

Whether you're cramming last minute for an exam, waking up for an 8am class, or trying to get over that 3pm hump, a cup of coffee can be just the pick-me-up you need in college. But can caffeine be dangerous? What are the side effects of frequently drinking caffeine? For answers, keep reading.

Caffeine is a naturally occurring drug that works as a stimulant on the body's central nervous system and metabolism. It has both physical and mental effects – causing increased alertness, coordination, and focus. Effects vary from person to person based on tolerance, body size, time of day, and whether it is ingested on an empty stomach. Caffeine generally lasts in the system for about five hours, with effects diminishing after consumption.

Many college students get their caffeine fix from other beverages in addition to coffee, such as teas, soda, and energy drinks. Keep in mind that bottled teas, sodas, and energy drinks are often high in added sugar and calories. For the breakdown on the caffeine content of some popular beverages, see the chart on the next page.

While studies have shown enhanced mental and physical performance due to caffeine, how much is too much? Excess caffeine can over-stimulate

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Real Food Snack Ideas

Most people I meet LOVE to snack. Snacks can help bridge the gap between meals, leaving you satisfied and well-fueled to perform your best. Rather than rely on things marketed as “snack foods,” I prefer to put combinations of real foods together to sustain my energy levels. Here are some of my favorites:

- 1/2 an apple with 1 Tablespoon all-natural peanut butter
- Part-skim mozzarella cheese stick with a small handful of whole grain crackers
- Plain 0% Greek yogurt topped with fresh berries and a sprinkle of nuts
- Any chopped fruit or veggie
- Celery sticks topped with a little all-natural almond butter and some

raisins

- 1/4 cup dried fruit and nut trek mix
- Sliced bell pepper and carrot sticks with 2-3 Tablespoons hummus
- Steamed edamame (with or without the pods) topped with a little coarse sea salt
- 1/2 cup low-fat cottage cheese topped with fresh fruit
- A homemade granola bar for on-the-go snacking. Looking for a good recipe? Try this [one](#).
- A small square of good quality dark chocolate for my sweet tooth

What’s your favorite real food snack?

Caffeine continued...

the body, causing heart palpitations, insomnia, increased heart rate, headaches, and acid reflux – negating the beneficial aspects that caffeine can offer. Regularly relying on large amounts of caffeine can lead to dependency, resulting in headaches, irritability, inability to concentrate, drowsiness, or insomnia within just 12-24 hours without caffeine intake. Remember to be mindful of the amount of caffeine you are ingesting depending on the type of beverage you choose.

You may have heard of popular studies that link moderate caffeine intake to decreased risk of hypertension, various cancers, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes, however most of these studies are inconclusive. Avoid drinking caffeine late at night, as it can disrupt sleeping patterns. The best way to keep your mind and body alert is to get enough sleep and get a bit of exercise. But, with the long classes, heavy workload, and last-minute studying in college – coffee can be a good way to sharpen your studying skills or to provide a jolt of energy if you’re feeling sluggish!

Did you know? Dark-roasted coffee has slightly less caffeine than lighter roasts because the roasting process reduces the bean’s caffeine content.

Beverage	Size	Caffeine Content
Black Coffee	8 oz	80-120 mg
Decaf Black Coffee	8 oz	5 mg
Black Tea	8 oz	15-60 mg
Green Tea	8 oz	24-40 mg
Coca Cola	12 oz	35 mg
Mountain Dew	12 oz	55 mg
Red Bull	8.4 oz	80 mg
5-Hour Energy	2 oz	207 mg

**Adapted from MayoClinic.com*

Favorite Food

Lots of people are curious about what dietitians eat when they are “off-duty.” I love to try out new recipes and it is not unusual for me to cook 4 or 5 new dinner entrees each week. Many of the dishes I have been creating in my kitchen utilize a sprinkle of a strong or atypical cheese, like feta, gorgonzola, parmesan, or asiago, for a bright and

delicious finishing flavor. The best part about using cheese this way? They add wonderful flavor and mouth feel to the dish without providing excess calories. You can also buy these cheeses in small quantities to avoid wasting food or use the leftovers to top a salad later in the week. Try topping your next dinner with a savory sprinkling of cheese!

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