

The Truth About Bread

Think potato chips are the biggest source of sodium in your diet? Think again, it's bread. Two slices of bread can deliver 460 mg, or 20 percent of the USDA's uppermost daily limit. Food doesn't have to taste salty to have high levels of sodium. Food manufacturers use various forms as preservatives and texturing agents, all which contribute to overall intake. No wonder 90 percent of Americans consume too much, raising the risk for high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. To scale back, opt for breads and rolls with 120 mg. or less per serving. Also, look twice at packages labeled "reduced sodium", which may contain less than the original version, but still too much.



The Truth About Coffee

When you think "superfood" you probably imagine blueberries or spinach. But potent plant goodness comes in liquid form too. Coffee is the nation's No. 1 source of antioxidants, accounting for 40 percent of our overall intake. Antioxidants are beneficial, because they combat free radicals, molecules that can increase disease by harming the body's cells. Continued research shows that a daily 8 oz. cup or two of brew-caffeinated or decaf protects against heart disease and stroke and is linked to lower incidence of death in general.

Of course, java can't replace a healthy diet. Coffee contains only one class of antioxidants, called polyphenols. Load up on nutrient rich, fresh, fruits and vegetables to ensure you're getting the full spectrum.



FOOD BANK OF SIOUXLAND

1313 11th Street
P.O. Box 985
Sioux City, IA 51102

Phone: 712-255-9741
Fax: 712-255-3116

E-mail: www.siouxlandfoodbank.org

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The Truth Shall Set You Free

The Truth About Snacks

Over the last 20 years, between meal snacking and nibbling has become nearly constant. Americans consume twice as many snacks as we did in 1977. Nearly a quarter of the calories in our diet is consumed between meals; about 504 calories a day. Temptation abounds, what with 41% of retail establishments now offering processed snacks. As a result, many of us now grab a candy bar when buying anything from socks to light bulbs. A better approach is to pack a snack from home that contains 100-200 calories, 10-15 grams of protein, and 2-5 grams of fiber, like trail mix. String cheese and grapes are a good option too. A smart choice can provide a nutritious energy boost and curb your appetite.



Red Meat Moderation

Juicy, mouthwatering steak can be part of a balanced diet— just don't bite off more than you should chew. Red meat is an excellent source of protein, iron, and B vitamins, but some cuts can be high in calories and artery clogging saturated fat. Even if you choose leaner cuts, jumbo portions can leave you too full for veggies and whole grains— and an abundance of disease fighting nutrients. The average person in the U.S. eats 34 ounces of red meat per week, far surpassing the 18-ounce limit suggested by the American Institute for Cancer Research.

To better measure your meal, put portions in perspective. A serving of red meat is 2 to 3 ounces cooked, about the size of a deck of cards. Sound skimpy? Make meals more satisfying with well-chosen extras: Top burgers with sautéed onions and mushrooms, fold grated carrots into meatloaf, and pile tacos with pepper slices. And don't let your guard down when dining out.



Mmmm. Juicy

Average portion size of steaks in restaurants is more than

twice the recommended size. Slice off a single serving and take the rest home. And remember, pork and lamb are considered red meat.

The Truth About Soft Drinks



You know you shouldn't drink too much soda because of all the sugar. But do you know just how much sugar is in each 12 oz. can? 39

grams (nearly 10 teaspoons) or well over the 25-gram limit for an entire day, according to the American Heart Association. In addition to weight gain, excess sugar may contribute to high blood pressure and systemic inflammation, two risk factors for heart disease. The average American consumes 90 grams of added sugar daily, largely through soft drinks. Sweetened beverages should be a once in a while treat instead of your go-to thirst quencher. Instead of soda, try unsweetened ice tea or seltzer water perked up with a splash of 100% fruit juice, citrus twist or mint sprig.

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