



## Why Eating More Good Stuff & Less Bad Stuff Helps Work Performance Factsheet

Do you ever stop to think what you are eating and how this effects your performance at work?

Have you considered that what you fuel your body with has a direct effect on your ability to carry out your daily work-related tasks?

The understanding of and being physically fit enough to face life's challenges, have the energy to get through the day, and having an eating, and hydration regime to support physical, thinking, and emotional needs is so important to improving your work place performance.

### **Five Good Food Habits**

The five factors related to our eating and lifestyle that will have an impact on our bodies and mind, as well as affecting our ability to succeed in our working lives are:

1. Eat more good stuff and less bad stuff (information below).
2. Don't skip breakfast – this will play havoc with your metabolism, affect your performance and could lead to more unhealthy lunch choices.
3. Look after your gut – get a variety of prebiotic and probiotic foods in your diet to maintain your good gut bacteria.
4. Hydration – aim to drink 3 – 4 cups of water a day to avoid loss of concentration.
5. Alcohol, drugs and other stimulants – w don't need to lecture you here, you know the risks. We all know how we struggled through a day with a hangover. I doubt any of us went home and said, "today was my most productive ever".

## **Eat More Good Stuff**

These practical tips, which were all derived from the NHS Healthy choices website cover the basics of healthy eating, and can help you make healthier choices:

- Eat lots of fruit and veg – It's now recommended that we eat at least ten portions of different types of fruit and veg a day, and it's easier than it sounds!

Be aware that whilst fruit is generally full of good stuff (nutrients), it is of course higher in sugar than vegetables as a rule. So always try to eat whole fruit as the fibre in it will help regulate your insulin and fill you up. Be careful of fruit juices, they are extremely high in sugary calories. If in doubt pile up your plate with veg!

- Eat more fish – Fish is a good source of protein and contains many vitamins and minerals. Aim to eat at least two portions a week, including at least one portion of oily fish. Oily fish is high in omega-3 fats, which may help to prevent heart disease.

You can choose from fresh, frozen and canned: but remember that canned and smoked fish can be high in salt.

## **Eat Less Bad Stuff**

- Cut down on saturated fat and sugar – We all need some fat in our diet, but it's important to pay attention to the amount and type of fat we're eating.

There are two main types of fat: saturated and unsaturated. Too much saturated fat can increase the amount of cholesterol in the blood, which increases your risk of developing heart disease. Saturated fat is found in foods such as hard cheese, cakes, biscuits, sausages, cream, butter, lard and pies.

- Eat less salt – Even if you don't add salt to your food, you may still be eating too much. About three-quarters of the salt we eat is already in the food we buy, such as breakfast cereals, soups, breads and sauces.

Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure. People with high blood pressure are more likely to develop heart disease or have a stroke.

## How This Helps Performance

As well as helping our physical health, the food we consume has a direct positive effect on our brain and mental health.

As well as offering better digestion and gut health, the food we consume also has a direct link to our concentration, mood, sleep patterns, and energy levels. This has an impact to help us look at situations differently, make more positive decisions.

## Making the Change

Faddy diets just don't work in the long term, as studies show we usually put the weight back on after the diet is stopped.

Here's some helpful tips to a better diet:

- Try putting more veg on your plate than you did before, then eat in order, veg first then the meat/protein and lastly if you are still not full the carbohydrate.
- Measure out your food, in particular, your carbs. Good old fashioned cups like your Nan used will do the trick.
- Try eating slower – try mindful eating. This will give your stomach time to tell the brain it's full.
- Eat less meat – as a rule, we eat far too much animal protein, which can cause several serious health issues, including heart disease and diabetes. Try making sure you limit meat your intake. Replace meat with nonanimal proteins such as nuts and soya. Replace a couple of meat dishes per week with fish.
- Try putting all the unhealthy stuff out of reach and out of sight.
- Replace the unhealthy stuff with easy to reach healthy stuff, for instance, have some sliced carrots and hummus in the fridge, keep the fruit bowl replenished, put some nuts in the cookie draw.
- Plan your meals in advance – think about the healthy options, if you must eat at the last minute, chances are it will be an unhealthy meal. There several online providers now that will send you to complete easy healthy meals all to cook from scratch in minimal time.

- Consider consulting a qualified nutritionist for a more tailored solution.