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Diet Choices - How to Keep Healthy and Happy

Maintaining your health and choosing foods that are beneficial for your body is much easier than you think. As the energy source for your body, making smart choices helps prevent disease, and gives you the power to get up and go!

This week, we'll discuss the latest findings around some common myths around what we eat and drink.

Water

We have all heard of the guideline of 8 glasses of water daily. However, when this standard was set, it didn't take into account the wide variability in people's size, diet, environment and activities.

Men actually need 13 cups and women need 9 cups from all sources. More if exercising or in hot, humid conditions. Coffee & tea can now be included (the diuretic effect has been determined to be minimal), but water is still the best choice for quenching thirst!

Salt

While it's true we do need some salt for our bodies to function, the truth is that we only need 1/10 of a teaspoon per day – and most of us are getting about 20 times that amount! To reduce your sodium intake, substitute fresh and dried herbs and spices and flavour enhancers such as lemon. Go for more fresh foods, sear/sauté/roast for flavour and get your whole grains from sources other than bread.

Cholesterol

Although most of the cholesterol in our bloodstream does not come from our diet, our diet can have a significant impact on our cholesterol levels.

Need to reduce your cholesterol? Oats & beans contain soluble fibre which binds cholesterol helps pull it out of our circulation. Nuts and fatty fishes have polyunsaturated fats which lower LDL (the "bad" cholesterol) and foods fortified with sterols/stanols help block cholesterol absorption.

Fructose

Fructose (a very sweet sugar usually sourced from corn) has cropped up as a major contributor to the obesity epidemic, but science is just beginning the sort out how and why.

Latest research indicates that fructose is able to trick the brain into thinking it still is hungry! It appears to stimulate the part of the brain which controls the desire for food – unlike glucose, which actually suppresses this activity.

It is true and there are a number of other ways your diet can impact your health. If you have questions about food choices, talk to our pharmacists for healthy diet tips.