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How to talk to your clients about nutrition

There is a big difference between the latest fad, or the opinion of the newest blogger, and **a real strategy based on scientific research and proven methods** to get results. This is true in many fields, including nutrition and meal planning.

As you work with your clients, you're sure to get asked a lot of questions. You may even be faced with some theory they've developed on their own, found on the Internet, or heard on late night TV. The truth about actual nutrition, however, is that it's fairly simple.

REAL, EFFECTIVE NUTRITION FOCUSES ON ONLY FIVE THINGS:



1. Balance

You're getting the right amount of the right things and limiting the things that can have a negative effect on your health.

2. Calorie Control

This isn't about just reducing calories; it's about making sure you have the right amount of calories throughout the day to keep your system working effectively.

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3. Moderation

You don't take in an excess amount of those things that can have a negative impact on your health.

4. Variety

Ensure proper nutrition but also eliminate the monotony of a diet. Variety is the spice of life!

5. Adequacy

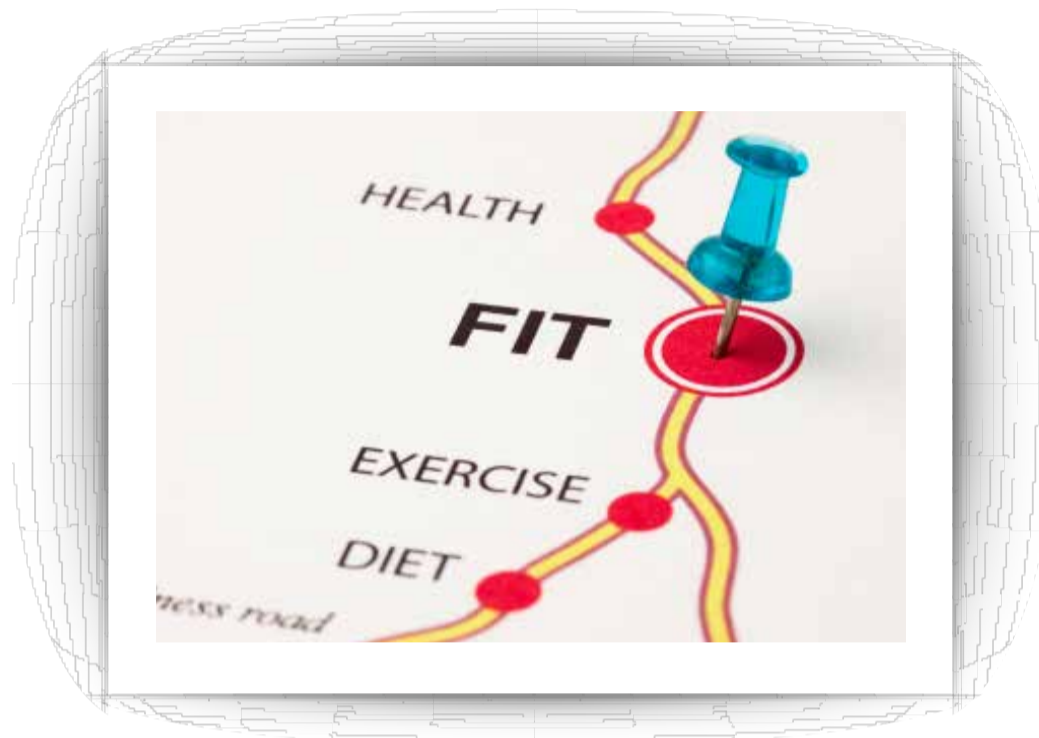
Make sure you're getting all of the essential nutrients you need to maintain health and replace what is lost on a daily or weekly basis.

The meal plan you're placing in your clients' hands will follow these five guidelines – and it's a rock-solid foundation. Even if they stray now and then, just by using this plan as a guide, they will be learning to **eat better**, and creating the behavioral changes needed to develop and **maintain the health changes** they want over the long haul. So no matter what your clients are asking you about their diet, just bring them back to these basics.

Even the best plan will fail if it's not executed properly. To **help your clients succeed**, emphasize that their custom meal plan has been designed to be:

A road map, not a rulebook.

Ask them to give you their best 80% every day, and let them pick a day to cheat (probably a weekend day) to give them some liberties. With a little



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flexibility, they're more likely to follow your plan on the other days, and, more often than not, will start doing better on those "cheat" days over time too.

Used throughout a three to four week period, even though it's a seven-day plan.

Human nature says we like patterns, so you'll find your client will use the plan as a guide day-to-day and week-to-week for a while. It's typical for two

things to happen around week four: they will begin to want a something new; and the results you're creating in their weight/body composition and activity level will produce new calculations that will require a new meal plan. OK, you're going to present your clients with their own meal plan and some tips on execution, but you can boost your credibility and their odds of success by sharing with them the **five key factors about what we're putting in our bodies:**

FIRST, THE MACRONUTRIENTS

1. Carbohydrates

The main purpose of carbohydrates is to **give us the energy we need to fuel our activities.** This energy comes from the break down of starches and sugars to their simplest forms, which your cells can then easily convert to usable

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power. Although protein and fat can also supply you with energy, your cells prefer the calories from carbohydrates. Remember: carbs can come from fruits, vegetables, grains — not just the doughnut everyone’s afraid of. In fact, some organs — your brain and kidneys, for example — have a specific need for a carbohydrate fuel source.

2. Protein

Found in meats, milk, eggs, soy, legumes and whole grains, protein supplies your body with a pool of amino acids, which are the building blocks of all your cells. As part of muscle, bone and skin tissue, **protein supports your body’s structure**. It also repairs cells if they become damaged and provides antibodies to cope with inflammation and infection. Your dietary protein helps keep your cellular machinery running smoothly.

3. Fat

Fat supplies more than twice the calories per gram as protein or carbohydrates and is a highly concentrated source of energy that your body can store for later. It provides structure to cell membranes and cushions your internal organs to help **prevent damage to tissues**. Fat serves as a vehicle for delivering vitamins, and it can store these nutrients as insurance against a deficiency. Dietary fats can come from both animal and plant sources, with plant-based foods, nuts and fish offering a healthier version.



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4. Vitamins and Minerals

These are small-molecule food components that support your health. Vitamins are involved in **energy production, healing wounds, eye and skin health, bone formation and immunity.**

Minerals provide structure to your skeleton, maintain your **cardiovascular health, and help maintain your nervous system.**

Eating a well-balanced diet with a variety of fruits and vegetables helps ensure you have plenty of these nutrients in your body.



5. Water and Fluid

Of all the nutrients in foods, the most important is water or fluid. It assists with maintaining normal body temperature, lubricates and cushions your joints, protects your spinal cord and removes wastes through urination, perspiration, and bowel movements. You need water to replace what your body loses through normal everyday functions.



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All of your meal plans balance these **five factors to** make sure you're delivering **a complete solution**.

NOW FOR A DEEPER DIVE INTO THE SCIENCE BEHIND EVERY MEAL PLAN.

All of your meal plans fall within the Acceptable Macronutrient Distribution Range (AMDR) outlined by The Institute of Medicine of The National Academies, as referenced in the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs). This is a fancy way of saying they have the right things in them, in the right amounts. They also subscribe to the accepted approach of **No Bad Foods**.

“Remember, there are no bad foods, just healthier ones to eat regularly. Weight loss requires a commitment to change your lifestyle. Keep up the exercise as it increases your metabolic rate and helps maintain your muscles, which burn more calories than body fat does.”

Jaime Ackerman Foster, MPH, RD, LD
Extension Nutrition Associate, The Ohio State University

This is the big one. You, and they, shouldn't be worried about the occasional treat, or, barring real health issues, even carbs, gluten, soy, or whatever the latest blog has told us to fear. The real impact of food comes from regular patterns and behaviors. A slice of cake now and then is a great thing to enjoy, but cake for breakfast everyday wouldn't be the way to go.

Nutrition, like exercise, takes effort if you're going to get results. **Your job is to coach them towards change.** Keep it simple, keep them excited, and you'll both get the results you want.

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