

HEALTHY EATING – DR GEORGE BLAIR-WEST’S CORE PRINCIPLES

This is the simple version of what to eat most of the time when not eating the more fattening foods you love. If you find yourself hungry after a meal, increasing the lean protein may be the key.

Breakfast – skip it at your peril

Breaking the night fast has two nutritional goals that are best achieved early in the day:

The first is getting most of our daily fibre intake by eating higher fibre cereals, fibre-enriched bread as toast (for both of these you need to check food labels and compare) and fruit. Rather than a jam or a spread, have your toast with eggs, trimmed ham, salmon, avocado etc.

The second goal is eating enough energy to take us out of a starvation mode – if we don't eat enough we become weight-loss resistant as our body moves into fat conserving mode. Lean protein, especially an egg or two, is best. Teens and young adults who complain of tiredness often find this is cured with some lean meat e.g. a steak, for breakfast. You must not feel hungry after breakfast.

AVOID fruit juice unless you make it yourself, as they are high in sugar and or fructose. Tea is great. Do not hold back on the milk (unless you have a dairy intolerance) butter or margarine on your toast.

Morning Tea – Fun, Fun

This is the best time of day to do two things: to eat your favourite loved, or high sacrifice food and to perfect the art of savouring your food. If morning tea does not work for you, for whatever reason, then as part of lunch is your next best choice.

Afternoon Tea – the most dangerous time to eat sweet food

Fruit or cheese/tinned fish (tuna/salmon/sardine) and crackers esp a crunch one like Vita wheats. Avoid the sweet foods and richer carbs (bread) at this time of day as you are more at risk of overeating them. If hunger is a recurring problem, have more lean protein at lunch.

Lunch & Dinner – Lean Protein and darker coloured food!

These are times for lean protein (fish being the best) in combination with veggies or your favourite salads. Lean protein means meat with the fat trimmed off (avoid low quality mince meats and sausage as these are filled out with fat and starchy components), chicken (that is not deep fried!) bacon with the fat trimmed off, pork, lamb etc. So this means that pasta/potato/rice/risotto/pizza dishes, if you really love them, become 'sometimes' foods – for lunch on weekends every week or two. Variety is the key. Take the time to find some great salad recipes, while roasting veggies in a healthy oil is always a winner, especially for children.

The only difference in the two meals is that lunch is the time to have a dessert rather than with the evening meal i.e. earlier in the day when your body has time to burn them off and you are less likely to overeat. Research shows that eating more for the evening meal is associated with weight gain, compared to when the same calories are eaten in the first half of the day.