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# INTRODUCTION

**“SO MUCH TO DO, SO LITTLE TIME.”**

If those words sound familiar, then this book is for you: the busy professional, student, parent, volunteer, or retiree who packs a lot into a typical day. Never before has so much attention been focused on what we eat and how it impacts our health. The evidence is overwhelming that good nutrition and a sound exercise program can help you stay healthy and prevent disease. But how can we fit good nutrition and exercise into days that are already packed with demands and responsibilities?

Adding to the time crunch, the “typical” work day has also changed. Life’s demands can begin before the crack of dawn and spill over into the evening hours. Technological advances enable us to work at any time of the day or night. In addition, work is often conducted during meals. Eating out becomes part of our busy lives, sometimes leaving us with little control over what, where, and when to eat.

However, what may appear to be an almost daunting task may actually be easier than you think. Combining a busy lifestyle with healthy eating and exercise can be a challenge but is not impossible. Some of the same skills you use to achieve balance in your typical day can be used to balance your health and nutrition. Planning and organizing are the key ingredients, so the most overwhelming tasks become easy and routine.

You asked. We've listened. Over the years we've listened carefully to you – our patients, family and friends. We know living healthy is a top priority. We've tried not to nag or preach, knowing the time pressures and that your daily lives and health are intrinsically intertwined. This patchwork of nutrition topics reflects your concerns.

A “back to basics” approach includes living healthy and concerns for planet earth. Research shows that our food choices can impact not only our health but the climate as well. Shifting your diet from meat and dairy to a vegetable-based one is healthy and can reduce carbon footprints. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines released on January 31, 2011 recommend that Americans reduce their salt, sugar and saturated fat. The guidelines encourage all Americans (ages 2 and older) to eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy and seafood. The guidelines also emphasize reducing calories and increasing activity to promote a healthy weight.

This past decade we've been bombarded with nutrition research and information. We have tried to sift through the information so you can use *Too Busy to Diet* as a quick reference. You need not read this book cover to cover, or page by page. Instead, pick it up as needed. Throw it in the glove compartment of your car, briefcase, backpack, or diaper bag. Pull it out during lulls in your day to help you navigate through your busyness. It will help you stay motivated and focused on a healthy lifestyle. We recommend you turn to *“Too Busy to Diet”* as often as needed.

## **OUR WISH LIST FOR YOU**

1. Cook healthy meals more often. Try a new recipe each week.
2. Eat more meals at home and sit down with the family (including your toddler).
3. Plan meals and snacks and shop for healthy foods at least once a week.
4. Discover simple, healthy recipes that you can make in less than 30 minutes.
5. Eat some of your favorite foods, some of the time: e.g., candy bar, ice cream.
6. Plant a garden or a pot with some favorite vegetables and herbs.
7. Don't spend money unnecessarily on supplements or trendy foods.
8. Avoid "junk nutrition"; look for reliable sources, e.g., registered dietitian.
9. Move more; take the stairs, walk around the office, clean the house.
10. Exercise daily at least 30 minutes.
11. Weigh yourself regularly.

Remember healthy eating is as easy as a quick trip to a local grocery store.

All you have to do is take some time out to plan a week of meals and snacks.

Shopping shouldn't take more than 15 to 20 minutes, and cooking a meal no more than 30 minutes. No more "I'm too busy or too tired". You'll have more energy if you regularly exercise and you'll feel better if you are eating healthy.

Bon Appétit!

# **SECTION 1**

## **CREATING A PLAN FOR HEALTHY EATING**

# HEALTHY EATING

**“LET THE FOOD BE THE MEDICINE AND MEDICINE BE THE FOOD.” -HIPPOCRATES**

The connection between the foods we eat and our health was recognized as far back as Hippocrates. Now there has never been a time when we have been so encouraged to take charge of our health by eating healthy and exercising more. Our diets should be made up of a variety of foods, emphasizing fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. There is no mystery to weight loss and management. The key strategy for losing weight has never changed: decrease calorie intake and increase physical activity. Drive-thru, convenience foods, and take-out foods are all around. Preparing fresh, less processed foods at home is done less and less. Fast and easy recipes are available, but it takes planning and shopping. If planned correctly, healthy eating can save you time, calories, and money.

When interviewed, individuals who spent much of their time “on the run” identified the availability of nutritious meals and snacks as a top priority. They acknowledged that traveling and eating out can interfere with eating healthy and maintaining a healthy body weight. Eating on the go has led to an overweight epidemic we face today in America. We battle large portion sizes and calorie-dense foods that are easily accessible and often inexpensive; in most cases, we lose the battle and give in.

We are all moving less than ever. Many of us who have cars don't even think about walking to errands. Buses pick us up at the station and deposit us at our workplace, stealing the opportunity to walk. Some individuals