

Eating for Beauty

Cadette *aMAZE* badge

Nutrition isn't just about maintaining a healthy weight: Eating well helps you inside and out. Choosing the right foods can help you sleep better, stress less, and get smooth skin, shiny hair, and strong nails. In this badge, find out how to eat to keep your skin glowing, your mind focused, and your energy flowing!

Steps

1. Know how good nutrition helps your body stay healthy
2. Find out how what you eat affects your skin
3. Explore how your diet affects your stress level
4. Investigate how what you eat affects your sleep
5. Look at how your diet affects your energy

Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I'll know how to eat my way to a healthy mood, mind, and body.

"For attractive lips, speak words of kindness.

For lovely eyes, seek out the good in people.

For a slim figure, share your food with the hungry.

For beautiful hair, let a child run their fingers through it once a day.

For poise, walk with the knowledge that you never walk alone."

-Audrey Hepburn, actress and humanitarian

Step 1 Know how good nutrition helps your body stay healthy

Your body is a complex, amazing machine. Are you giving it the right kind of fuel? Set habits now that will keep your body at its peak performance all your life. First, take a look at the good and great, the bad and really bad in your current eating habits.

CHOICES - DO ONE:

Eat by color! Use the food pyramid's color groups to track how many servings of each color you're eating. Try this for two weeks and see if you can make the second week healthier than the first.

FOR MORE FUN: Create a colors quiz and give it to five friends to help them choose a healthy variety of foods, too.

OR

Have a food-log challenge with friends. Make an exact and honest list of everything (everything!) you eat for a week. Swap your list with a friend and analyze each other's choices.

Decide on two changes you can make that will result in healthier eating habits, and put them in action for the next week.

OR

Make your own food pyramid. Trace the FDA pyramid. Then head to your fridge and pantry, and draw what's in them onto your pyramid. The foods from your house might look different from the pictures on the pyramid, but the FDS guidelines can still help if you know where your foods fit in. Share your pyramid with Girl Scout friends and work together to write a week's worth of healthy meals from your pyramids.

You, Junk Food, and the SOFA

The "junk" in "junk food" refers to the fact that such foods have little or no health value. How can you tell from the label whether a food is junk? Trick question! The easiest way to avoid junk is to eat foods that have no labels at all. Packaging means processing – and processed foods usually contain additives like extra sugars and chemicals for color or shelf life.

If you choose to eat packaged foods, find the healthiest ones by thinking of this mantra: "Get off the SoFAS!" That's a great reminder to exercise but it also reminds you to avoid Solid Fats and Added Sugars. Solid fats are trans fats and saturated fats, and added sugars can be called names like "corn syrup," "fructose," and "dextrose."

Step 2 Find out how what you eat affects your skin

Lean protein, complex carbohydrates, whole grains, fruits, and veggies make your skin, hair, and nails look better. People used to think chocolate and greasy food caused acne, but research indicates they have little effect on pimple production. However, drinking water is beneficial for skin health, glow, and for reducing acne. Get your skin glowing in this step.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Get enough water. Scientists used to think that everyone needed to drink eight glasses of water a day, but most researchers now think that number is too high. Find out the best amount of water for your age and activity level, and come up with three clever ways to get enough water every day. You might program your computer or phone to make a gurgling noise for an alarm, or place a glass pitcher with beautiful lemon slices on your desk. Practice for a week – and see if you can get others to join you!

OR

Make a Top 10 list of antioxidant-rich foods. Come up with a way to work at least four into your regular diet.

OR

Do a grocery-store scavenger hunt. Find foods that contain selenium, essential fatty acids, healthy oils and/or vitamin A – all thinks that are thought to improve skin health. Choose three of these foods to work into your meal routine.

“Use [sunscreen] products containing zinc or avobenzone. You need to make sure they are the called-out ingredients in the active ingredient list or you’re probably doing your skin more damage. People have a false sense of security with sunscreens. You need things that won’t let UVA light get through or you will accumulate more UV damage. This explains why the rate of skin cancer and aging has continued and progressed even though we’re wearing more sunscreen than before.” -Katie Rodan, cocreator of Proactive Solution and Rodan + Fields skin care products

Page from the Past

Health Badge, 1913

Here’s everything required of girls to earn the very first Girl Scout Health badge. It’s clear some health advice has changed over the past 100 years – and some has stayed the same.

Do not chew gum.

Eat no sweets, candy, or cake between meals for three months

(except tea, coffee, chocolate, or cocoa).

Walk a mile daily for three months.

Sleep with open window.

Take a bath or rub all over with a wet towel daily for three months.

Antioxidants

“Antioxidants combat the oxidant stress and damage done to cells by aging, stress, smoking, and UV rays.” -Amy Wechsler, M.D., author of *the Mind-Beauty Connection*

Antioxidants are chemicals that help your body flush out toxins which helps prevent cell damage and repair damage already done. (There is no hard scientific evidence that antioxidants help prevent and clear up acne, though many skin care experts say they do.)

These handy helpers are present in many fruits and vegetables – berries and dark green, leafy veggies have particular antioxidant power. Other foods high in antioxidants? Dark chocolate and green tea.

Step 3 Explore how your diet affects your stress level

Caffeine and sugar affect mood swings fatigue, and your ability to concentrate. When your levels of cortisol (also known as the stress hormone) go up, so do your cravings for fat sugar and salt – what a cycle! Take a look into the science behind eating and stress.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Food makeovers. Find three foods you eat that are high in sugar fat, or salt, and make a healthier choice, either by substituting another food altogether or by creating new recipes that use healthier ingredients. Food magazines and websites are full of fun tricks for this.

FOR MORE FUN: Make up cards with your most successful recipes and give them to friends and family – or post them on a family, Girl Scout, or personal blog.

OR

Sugar detective. Just because the label doesn't say "sugar" doesn't mean the product isn't full of it. Look up all the names under which sugar masquerades. Then take a trip to the store and find as many items as possible with sugar in disguise.

FOR MORE FUN: Make up a silly song or phrase that will help you cease and desist when you crave sugar.

OR

Chemical detective. Go online or to a library to research food additives and chemicals that are believed to contribute to anxiety and stress. See how many you can find in the foods you and your family eat. Talk to your family about limiting these foods and finding substitutes for them, and why it's important to your family's health.

More to Explore

Pretend you're a Girl Scout in 1980. As girls did to earn their Personal Health badge, keep a personal-feelings journal for at least three weeks. Record your thoughts about things you do and how you get along with other people. Write down things that make you happy, calm, proud, sad, angry, jealous, etc. Look over your journal after three weeks, and see if it tells you something you didn't know about yourself.

Step 4 Investigate how what you eat affects your sleep

Lack of sleep affects your ability to focus, your stress level, your weight . . . the list goes on and on. Research says that teens and tweens need more sleep than adults do and are more affected by lack of sleep than adults are. Check out how what you eat - and when you eat - can help you get better sleep.

CHOICES - DO ONE:

Make an illustrated chart of snooze/lose foods. These are foods that help you sleep and those that keep you awake. Post it near your bed and keep a journal for a week to see what works for you and what doesn't.

FOR MORE FUN: Track your dreams for the week, too. Are they related to what you've been eating, or how much you sleep?

OR

Take the two-week test. For two weeks, track the time you eat dinner, what and how much you eat at dinner and before bed, and how easy it is to get to sleep. Keep other variables the same - hit the sack at the same time, and exercise the same amount during the day. Do you notice that caffeine and high-sugar snacks before bed tweak your system?

OR

REM it up. Look into the importance of rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. Many specialists stress the importance of uninterrupted sleep, which means not drinking after a certain time so you won't have to get up to use the bathroom. Avoid drinking three hours before you go to bed for four nights in a row. Did you sleep better?

Is there any such thing as brain food?

Age-old advice says eating fish is good for your brain the way eating carrots is good for your eyes. Lots of research has been done to try to determine whether that's good advice or not. Recently, a number of studies have indicated, at least in a small way, that the omega-3 fatty acids in fish do indeed improve brain function and may ward off diseases such as Alzheimer's.

It is natural to feel bright, happy, and gay one day and blue as indigo the next. The most important thing is to get better acquainted with yourself so you can control your moods.

-*Girl Scout Handbook* 1953

Step 5 Look at how your diet affects your energy

Keeping energy up is all about keeping blood sugar steady - not up or down. For some people, eating whole foods and enough fiber and protein at each meal does the trick. For others, eating five or six small meals throughout the day works best.

CHOICES - DO ONE:

Take a poll of friends and family. Ask them five questions about when they feel most energetic and how it seems to relate to what and when they've eaten. Now ask yourself the same questions. What conclusions or advice can you draw?

OR

Do an exercise/energy experiment. There are times during the day - especially when you exercise - when getting food into your body fast is key. Make a list of 20 healthy foods you can make and eat quickly. Star those that are portable and keep one or two in your backpack for a week. See which ones make you feel best before, during, and after your workouts.

OR

Create a chart or blog post. Explain the ways the fiber and vitamins in five different fruits can help you stay energized and why.

FOR MORE FUN: Go apple- or berry-picking and make your chart about what you picked.

What Would Your Grandmother Say?

One way to identify a healthy, whole, fiber-filled food (the kind that boosts your energy) is to ask yourself whether your great-grandmother could have eaten it. If the answer is yes, chances are that food is pretty healthy. If the answer is no you're probably holding what food expert Michael Pollan calls "an edible food-like substance."

MINDFUL EATING

Have you ever looked down at your plate and realized you remember starting your meal, but aren't sure when or how you finished it? Mindful eating means being aware of all the senses involved in savoring food and addressing the different types of hunger your body experiences. People who practice mindful eating say that, without dieting they naturally eat just the right amount of food for their body to look and feel its absolute best.

Try one of these exercises from Jan Chozen Bays,
author of *Mindful Eating*

- At family meals, you might ask everyone to eat in silence for the first five minutes, thinking about the many people who brought the food to their plates.
- Try eating one meal a week mindfully, alone and in silence. Be creative. For example, could you eat lunch in an empty classroom, or a quiet corner outside?
- Try taking the first four sips of a cup of tea or coffee with full attention.
- If you are reading and eating, try alternating these activities, not doing both at once. Read a page, then put the book down and eat a few bites, savoring the tastes then read another page, and so on.

Add the Badge to Your Journey

When you do step 4, invent some amazing, energy-boosting “snack friends.” (Carrots and yogurt dip? Almonds and raisins?) then swap lists of your favorite energy-boosting snack pairs with your friends. As you go on to earn your Diplomat award serve your favorite energy-boosting snacks.

Not that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Helping my friends choose snacks for healthy skin, hair, and nails
- Sharing my personal food pyramid with my family and helping them eat a balanced diet from what's in the house
- Inspiring my friends to enjoy their meals more slowly

I'm inspired to:

