

Summary of Session Four of Eating for Your Health

Healthy Eating

You can follow a healthier eating pattern, as long as you are not depriving yourself. Because when deprivation is present, any changes you make will not be sustainable. Diets do not work remember, and diets thrive on deprivation. Healthy eating is NOT eating to a schedule, weighing or measuring foods, avoiding food groups, or feeling guilty after meals. It is important to understand that all foods have their time and place – food is just food. Sure, some foods are more advantageous to physical health than others, and different foods give us different things at different times – like energy or nourishment and sometimes they are there simply to give us a good time. But no foods are good or bad and more importantly, no foods should ever have the power to make you feel bad about yourself.

Every Day & Sometimes Foods

Every day foods provide the things needed to keep our bodies functioning well. There is nothing wrong or bad about the sometimes foods, but they do not necessarily give our bodies all the things to keep them functioning well. The overall recommendation is to enjoy a wide variety from the every day foods, but that having the sometimes foods added in here and there is also ok too. When we get used to all foods be allowed, and take the time to practise eating them mindfully and notice when we are satisfied, it is possible to eat all foods in a healthy way. No shame or guilt!

You can use the Heart Foundation Healthy Heart graphic and/or the Healthy Plate Model to help guide you, but make sure any changes you make focus on adding things in (rather than taking them away). The most common addition people say they want to make is adding in more vegetables. The website www.vegetables.co.nz is a fantastic source of information to help with this.

Being Prepared

Planning and preparation will make it easier to make decisions that are in line with your goals – whatever those goals are. In terms of food, you can practice good self-care by planning meals, shopping for ingredients, preparing meals with lots of variety, and stocking a variety of foods available for snacks. Be careful not to make it into too rigid a meal plan though (as that is basically a diet), rather view it as planning in order to enjoy nice meals.

Giving Yourself Positive Encouragement

It is important to look after yourself and give yourself positive encouragement for things you do. Looking after yourself and treating yourself well can help you to make changes. If you can incorporate this self-care, you are more likely to feel good about yourself, and positive feelings = positive actions.

Goal Setting

Setting a goal for yourself can help to fine tune your focus and provide motivation for change. It is best to be really specific when setting goals and the “SMARTER Planning for Change” sheet can help you with this. If you find you set a goal, but do not achieve it, evaluate what happened and reflect on why the goal did not work. No judgement or criticism on yourself, just curiosity. Then you can adjust the goal and try again. Make sure it is small enough for you to feel you can start today and do it forever.

That was the last session in the series of Eating for Your Health. We wish you all the very best.

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