Healthy Diet Can Cut Risks



Safety Talk

A safe, healthy workplace is also about food. A balanced, nutritious diet can:

- Boost energy and combat fatigue
- Reduce anxiety and stress
- Improve mood and self-esteem
- Reduce risk of heart disease and some forms of cancer

In the workplace your body needs energy to function well. Carbohydrates require less oxygen than fat does to provide the same amount of energy.

There are many alternatives to high-fat foods. Whole-grain bread and pasta, beans, fruits and vegetables provide the complex carbohydrates you need for energy. In contrast, rolls, donuts or cookies give only short-lived energy. Spaghetti with meat sauce is better than fried foods or steak. Use low-fat or fat-free dairy products and dressings

For snacks, eat fruit or fat-free desserts instead of candy and soda. If you insist on high-fat calories, save them for the last meal of the day when activities aren’t so physically demanding.

Here are more good choices to maintain energy and alertness:

- Low-fat protein – lean meats, skinless poultry, fish, shellfish, soybeans
- High-complex carbohydrates – fruit and vegetable juices, cooked fruits and vegetables, potatoes, rice, noodles, macaroni.

These would be poor choices:

- Sugar – pastries, ice cream, sweets, soft drinks.
- High-fat foods – poultry skin, fatty meats, pizza (cheese-covered bread), whole-milk products, potato and corn chips, French fried potatoes.

In the workplace you may need fluid and salt supplements.

A person working at a high pace or in hot conditions loses water and salt through sweat, and should consume more water and salt.

Replacing fluid loss may require a quart or liter of water each hour. Drink cool water every 15 or 20 minutes in such conditions, even if you don’t feel thirsty. Sports drinks designed to replace body fluids and electrolytes also help.

Workers accustomed to lifting heavy loads or working in the heat sweat more “efficiently.” They sweat sooner and more, but lose less salt than those new to the work. Salt in a normal diet is usually enough to maintain the acclimated workers’ electrolyte balance.

Workers who aren’t acclimatized could use extra salt in food. Salt tablets aren’t as efficient because the salt doesn’t enter the body system as fast as fluids. Too much salt can raise your temperature and also can make you feel thirsty or sick. If you’re on a salt-restricted diet, get medical advice on how much salt you need.

Diet is important. Ignoring that fact could deplete your energy.