Chapter 9

Making Healthy Food Choices

Section 1
Choosing Food Wisely

Building Health Skills
- Accessing Information
- Reading a Food Label

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Safely Managing, Your Weight
- MediaWise Evaluating Diet Plans

Section 3
Nutrition for Individual Needs

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I eat when I am watching television, listening to music, or just sitting around.

I eat when I am out with friends.

I eat when I feel stressed.

I eat when I am bored.

I eat when I feel sad or depressed.

Look over your responses. What did you learn about your eating patterns?

Quick Quiz  How many of these statements are true for you?

1. I eat when I am bored.
2. I eat when I feel stressed.
3. I eat when I am out with friends.
4. I eat when I am watching television, listening to music, or just sitting around.
5. I eat when I feel sad or depressed.

Why You Eat

If asked why you eat, you might say, “Because I get hungry.” But, is this always true? You eat for several reasons: to meet your nutritional needs, to satisfy your appetite, and to supply your body with energy.

Hunger is a feeling of physical discomfort that is caused by your body's need for nutrients. By contrast, appetite is a desire for food that is based on emotional and other factors rather than nutritional need. Unlike hunger, which is an inborn response, appetite is learned. For example, your appetite may make you want to eat popcorn because you have learned to associate its aroma with a delicious taste. Your appetite can make you eat even when you are not hungry.

Basal Metabolic Rate  Your nutritional needs, and therefore your calorie needs, are related to your basal metabolic rate. Your basal metabolic rate (BMR) is the rate at which you use energy when your body is at rest. The higher your BMR, the more calories you burn. Various factors affect BMR. Younger people tend to have a higher BMR than older ones. People who have more muscle mass tend to have a higher BMR than those with less muscle mass because muscle burns calories.

Your level of activity also affects your calorie needs. The more active you are, the more calories you need. Figure 1 compares the number of calories burned per hour for various activities.
The Foods You Choose  Do you eat breakfast? What’s your favorite snack? Your answers to questions like these depend on many factors.

- **Personal Preferences** Of course, you choose many of the foods you eat simply because they taste good. You might love the taste of peanut butter, for example, while your sister might not. You might dislike fish, or choose not to eat red meat. Whatever your personal preferences are, they have a huge impact on your food choices every day.

- **Cultural Background** Your cultural background, or heritage, may also influence your eating habits. For example, one family might eat a traditional Korean breakfast of soybean soup and rice. Another family might eat a typical Mexican meal of tortillas with beans and rice.

- **Time and Convenience** Do you sometimes eat on the run? A busy schedule might lead you to choose foods that can be prepared quickly or that can be easily carried in your backpack. Alternatively, you might choose to eat at a fast-food restaurant rather than prepare a meal at home.

- **Friends** When you eat a meal with friends, you may choose different foods than when you are by yourself or with your family. Friends might influence you to try new foods or to change your eating habits.

- **The Media** Every day, you are bombarded with information about food—in advertisements, news articles, diet books, and more. All of these messages can influence your decisions about what foods to eat or to avoid.

**Calories Burned During Various Activities**

[Graph showing calories burned per hour for various activities: Sleep, Talk on phone, Clean room, Karate, Jump rope]

**FIGURE 1** The number of calories you burn depends on how active you are. More intense exercise burns more calories than less intense exercise or sitting.

**Calculating** In terms of calories burned, about how many hours of talking on the phone would it take to equal one hour of karate?
Evaluating Food Choices

Planning a sensible diet involves choosing nutritionally balanced meals and snacks. Your food choices may seem overwhelming, but tools are available to help you make good decisions. When choosing foods, it is important to read and evaluate the information on the food label. The information includes nutrition facts, nutrient and health claims, Daily Values, and freshness dates.

Food Labels  
The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires manufacturers to include food labels on most prepared foods, such as canned and frozen foods, breads, cereals, and drinks. Food labels must list specific nutrition facts about the food, including calorie and nutrient content, and the ingredients. The label is usually printed on the back or side of the package. You can practice reading food labels as you study the Building Health Skills on pages 224–225.

Nutrient and Health Claims  
Have you ever seen a label on a food that said “fat free”? Did you wonder what that claim meant? The FDA also sets standards regarding the nutrient claims that can be printed on a food label.

In addition, the FDA has approved the use of some health claims on food labels. Health claims are statements that link use of the food to certain health risks or benefits. Figure 2 explains some common nutrient and health claims you might see on food labels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrient and Health Claims</th>
<th>What It Says</th>
<th>What It Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...Free</td>
<td>Fat Free: Contains less than 0.5 g fat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sugar Free: Contains less than 0.5 g sugars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low in...</td>
<td>Low in Calories: Contains less than 40 calories</td>
<td>Low in Sodium: Contains less than 140 mg sodium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High in...</td>
<td>High in Vitamin C: One serving provides 20% or more of the Daily Value for vitamin C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Contains 50% less fat or at least $\frac{1}{3}$ fewer calories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent source of...</td>
<td>Excellent source of calcium: One serving provides 20% or more of the Daily Value for calcium.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May reduce your risk of heart disease</td>
<td>Can appear on fiber-containing grain products, fruits, and vegetables that are also low in saturated fat and cholesterol.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 2  
Claims about a food's nutrient or health benefits must follow standards set by the FDA. Evaluating  
How can foods that bear the claim “light” help you have a healthier diet?
Daily Values  How much protein do you eat each day? Do you eat too much saturated fat? To help you answer these questions, nutritionists have developed a tool called Daily Values. Daily Values are recommendations that specify the amounts of certain nutrients that the average person should obtain each day. Daily Values are only a general guide because they are calculated for the average person who consumes a total of 2,000 calories a day. Rapidly growing adolescents, for example, may need more nutrients than the Daily Values indicate. Other factors that affect nutrient needs include age, sex, heredity, and activity level.

When you buy a food, the food label lists the percent Daily Value for each nutrient in that food. For example, the food label on a package of crackers might indicate a percent Daily Value for iron of 12 percent. This means that one serving of the crackers provides 12 percent of the iron that the average person needs each day.

Open Dates  The labels on prepared foods also include open dates. These dates give you an idea of how long the food will be fresh and safe to eat.

- The “sell-by” date tells you the last date the product can be sold. You can still use a product after the sell-by date.
- The “best-if-used-by” date tells you how long the product will be at peak quality.
- The “do-not-use-after” date is the expiration date. This is the last date you should consume the product.

Section 1 Review

Key Ideas and Vocabulary
1. List three main reasons why people eat.
2. What is hunger? Distinguish hunger from appetite.
3. What is basal metabolic rate? How does your basal metabolic rate affect your calorie needs?
4. List three types of information included on a food label to help you evaluate the food.
5. What is meant by percent Daily Value? How are Daily Values useful as a guide to eating?

Critical Thinking
6. Evaluating How do time and convenience affect the food choices you make? Give two examples.

Natural and Organic Foods  Some food manufacturers use the terms “natural foods” and “organically grown” to describe food products. Find out what these claims mean. In a paragraph, offer your opinion about whether these products are healthier than similar products that do not make those claims.


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Reading a Food Label

Before you even enter a supermarket, advertisements in magazines, newspapers, and television try to convince you to buy certain foods. To judge the nutritional value of a food, do not rely on advertisements or nice-looking packages. Instead, read the food label carefully. The FDA requires packaged foods to be labeled with nutrition information. For foods with more than one ingredient, the FDA also requires that ingredients be listed.
1 Read the ingredients list.
   - Notice that ingredients are listed in order by weight, from most to least.
   - Become familiar with terms for different kinds of ingredients. For example, words ending in -ose are often names of sugars.
   - Check for food additives, such as artificial sweeteners (aspartame, sucralose) and preservatives (BHA, BHT, sulfites). Also check for other additives, such as food dyes.
   - Note if the food is enriched (lost nutrients have been restored) or fortified (nutrients have been added).
   - If you have dietary restrictions or allergies, look for those foods on the ingredients list.

2 Note the number of servings per container.
Serving sizes are standardized for more than 100 different food categories. This allows you to compare similar food products by the number of servings they provide.

3 Note the number of calories in one serving.
Keep in mind that daily calorie intake depends on a person's age, sex, weight, basal metabolic rate, and activity level.

4 Look at the percentages of the Daily Values.
   - Note the percentage Daily Values for nutrients that you should limit, such as saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium. If a food is high in those nutrients, you may want to avoid it.
   - Check the percentage Daily Values for fiber and valuable vitamins and minerals, such as iron and calcium.

5 Look for any health or nutrient claims.
Because these claims are regulated by the FDA, they reveal useful information about the product.

Practice the Skill

1. Use the information on the macaroni and cheese label to answer these questions.
   a. What ingredients are contained in the cheese sauce part of the mix? Which of those ingredients is present in the largest amount?
   b. What percentage of the Daily Values for saturated fat does one serving contain? If you wanted to eat this macaroni and cheese as part of a balanced meal, should the other foods be high in fat? Explain.
   c. Do you think that this food would be a good choice for someone on a low-sodium diet? Why or why not?
   d. Is this food a good source of vitamin C?

2. Compare the food labels for several different breakfast cereals.
   a. How many different sugars are found in each cereal?
   b. Which cereal is highest in iron? What percentage of the Daily Value for iron does that cereal provide?
   c. Which cereal is the most nutritious overall? Explain your choice.