

For Your Health

Nutrition

At Aetna, we believe there is nothing more important than your health. That's why we're pleased to bring you information to help you take an active role in the management of your health.

Read on to learn more.

The Importance of Nutrition

The importance of good nutrition is nothing new. Back in 400 B.C., Hippocrates said, "Let food be your medicine and medicine be your food." Today, good nutrition is more important than ever. At least four of the ten leading causes of death in the U.S. — heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes — are directly related to the way we eat; diet is also implicated in scores of other conditions. But while the wrong diet can be deadly, eating right is among the key cornerstones of health.

Of course, food alone isn't the key to a longer and healthier life. Good nutrition should be part of an overall healthy lifestyle, which also includes regular exercise, not smoking or drinking alcohol excessively, stress management and limiting exposure to environmental hazards. And no matter how well you eat, your genes play a big part in your risk for certain health problems. But don't underestimate the influence of how and what you eat.

For example, atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) can begin in early childhood, but the process can be halted — even reversed — if you make healthy changes in your diet and lifestyle. The gradual bone thinning that results in osteoporosis may be slowed if you consume enough calcium, maintain adequate Vitamin D levels and participate in weight-bearing exercise. You may be genetically predisposed to diabetes, but keep your weight within a healthy range through diet and exercise and the disease may never strike you.

The Keys to Good Nutrition

The keys to good nutrition are *balance, variety and moderation*. To stay healthy, your body needs the right balance of carbohydrates, fats, and protein — the three main components of nutrition.

You also need vitamins, minerals and other substances from many different foods, and while some foods are better than others, no single food or food group has it all — so eating a variety of different foods is essential.

Moderation means eating neither too much nor too little of any food or nutrient. Too much food can result in excess weight and even too much of certain nutrients, while eating too little can lead to numerous nutrient deficiencies and low body mass.

Visit Aetna Navigator online at www.aetna.com!

The Aetna Navigator™ online member self-service website is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Use it to perform common transactions involving your Aetna medical, dental, prescription drug or flexible spending account (FSA) plans. You can send an online message to Aetna Member Services, access claims, coverage, and general health information as well as decision-support tools. Log on to Aetna Navigator at www.aetna.com.

Reprinted with permission from Aetna IntelliHealth® and Harvard Medical School (www.intelihealth.com). Medical content reviewed by the Faculty of Harvard Medical School. Copyright 1996 – 2005.

Additional information is available on Aetna's consumer health information website, Aetna IntelliHealth, at www.intelihealth.com/IH/ihtlH/WSIHV000/325/7094.html.

This information is for informational purposes only, is not medical advice and is not intended to be a substitute for proper medical care provided by a physician.

Aetna is the brand name used for products and services provided by one or more of the Aetna group of subsidiary companies. The Aetna companies that offer, underwrite or administer benefits coverage include: Aetna Health Inc., Aetna Health of California Inc., Aetna Health of the Carolinas Inc., Aetna Health of Illinois Inc., Aetna Health Insurance Company of New York, Corporate Health Insurance Company and/or Aetna Life Insurance Company.