

Nutrition Basics



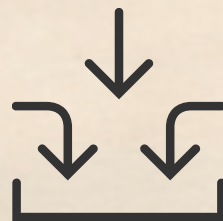
WHAT ARE NUTRIENTS? Nutrients provide the nourishment that your body needs in order to live and grow. **Macronutrients** are nutrients that your body needs a lot of, like protein, carbohydrates, & fat. **Micronutrients** are needed in smaller amounts and include vitamins and minerals. All are essential to good health.



WHAT ARE CALORIES? Calories are heat units that describe the amount of energy that a food will produce in the body. **Empty calories** belong to foods that will provide energy but no nutrients or fiber. **Added sugars** are common sources of empty calories and should only be consumed in moderation.



WHAT IS AN EATING PATTERN? According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, an eating pattern "represents the totality of all foods and beverages consumed." By eating a balanced and varied eating pattern that is high in nutrients and low in empty calories, you can boost your health and reduce your risk of chronic disease.



HOW DOES FOOD AFFECT HEALTH? What you eat can have a huge impact on your health. For example, if you take in excess calories than you need each day, then over time you will gain extra weight. This in turn increases your **risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and even certain cancers**. If instead you eat a variety of healthful foods that are nutrient-dense and stay within reasonable calorie limits, then you can **improve your health and energy levels while reducing your risk of disease**.