How do you get started on healthy eating?

Healthy eating starts with learning new ways to eat, such as adding more fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and cutting back on foods that have a lot of fat, salt, and sugar. A change to healthier eating also includes learning about balance, variety, and moderation.

Aim for balance.	Most days, eat from each food group -- grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, and m
Look for variety.	Be adventurous. Choose different foods in each food group. For example, do
Practice moderation.	Don't have too much or too little of one thing. All foods, if eaten in moderation

Why pay attention to what you eat?

Healthy eating will help you get the right balance of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients. It will help you feel your best and have plenty of energy. Healthy eating is one of the best things you can do to prevent health problems, such as heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, and some types of cancer.

Is healthy eating the same as going on a diet?

Healthy eating is not a diet. It means making changes you can live with and enjoy for the rest of

your life. Diets are temporary. Because you give up so much when you diet, you may be hungry and think about food all the time. And after you stop dieting, you also may overeat to make up for what you missed. Eating a healthy, balanced variety of foods is far more satisfying. And if you match that with more physical activity, you are more likely to get to a healthy weight-and stay there-than if you diet.

How do you make healthy eating a habit?

First, think about your reasons for healthier eating. Do you want to improve your health? Do you want to feel better? Are you trying to set an example for your kids? Next, think about some small changes you can make. Pick ones you can keep doing. Don't try to change everything at once. Set an easy goal you can reach, like having a salad and a piece of fruit each day.

Make a long-term goal, too, such as having one vegetarian dinner a week.

Where can you get support?

Having support from others can be a huge help. The more support you have, the easier it will be to make changes. Ask family and friends to practice healthy eating with you. Have them help you make meals, and share healthy, delicious recipes and cooking tips. If you need more help, talk to your doctor or a registered dietitian. Look online for groups that support healthy eating and share success stories. For more information about a healthy diet, visit Mercy's Website at www.mercysiouxcity.com
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