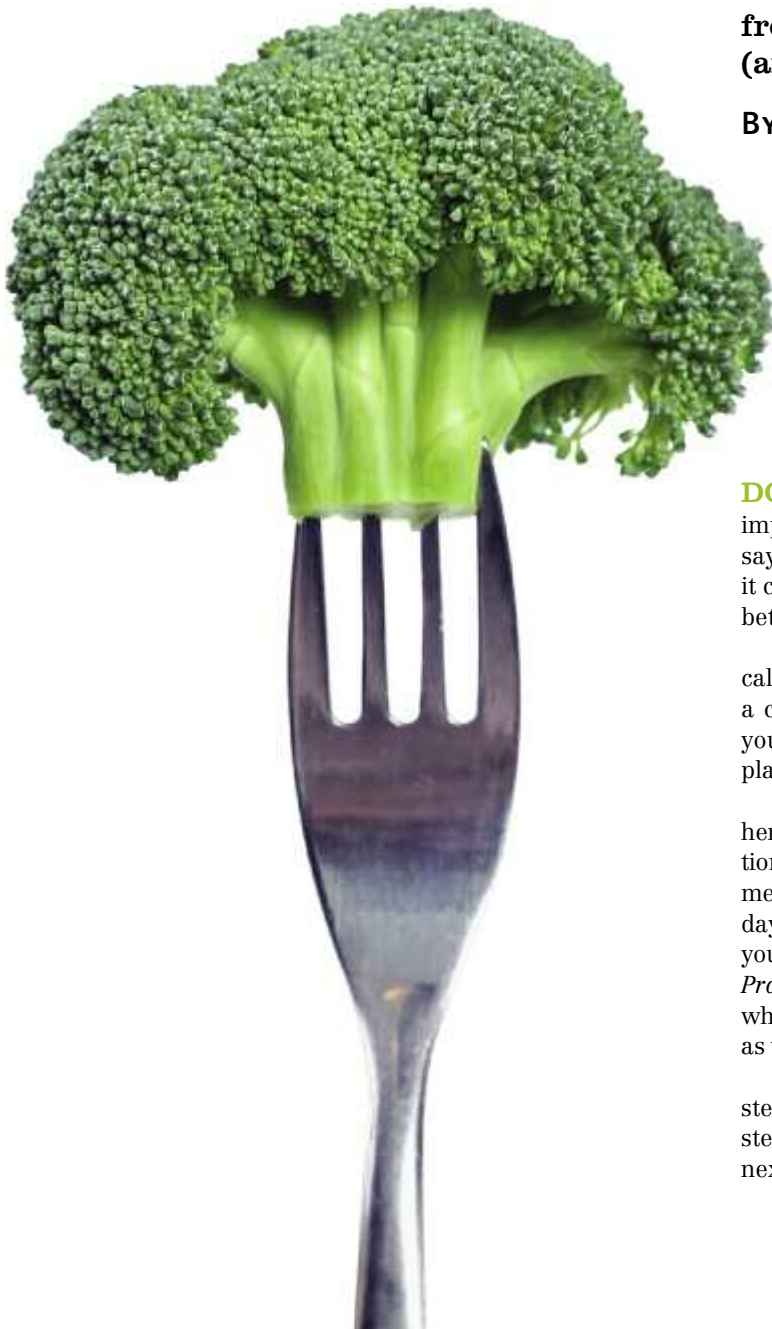


Conquer *the* Kitchen

Five steps that will take your diet from downtrodden to triumphant (and you along with it)

By **DAVID McLAY**



DOCS TELL US TO EAT BETTER; IT'S AN important way to keep your immune system strong, they say. Sounds simple, but when you try to put it into practice, it can be simply overwhelming. Where to start? What to do better?

First of all, good nutrition is not about counting every calorie or weighing each slice of bread. Nor does it involve a complete overhaul of your diet and eating habits. What you do need to become a triumphant warrior is a battle plan. In the case of nutrition, your battle plan is a menu.

So how do you conquer the kitchen? Fear not, CATIE is here to help you devise a plan to harness the forces of nutrition. In this article you'll find five steps for planning a daily menu that will meet your nutrition needs as well as a one-day sample menu and a list of good stuff to have on hand in your kitchen pantry. We've drawn the information from our *Practical Guide to Nutrition for People Living with HIV*, which also talks about vitamins, minerals and supplements as well as how to deal with symptoms, side effects and more.

Here's how it works: Start with one of the numbered steps and keep at it until it sticks. Then, move on to another step. Don't get discouraged if you stray from the plan. The next meal is always another chance to do better.



1

Start with fruits and vegetables 7 servings each day

- Include fresh, frozen, canned or dried vegetables and fruits as well as vegetable or real fruit juice. Eat more whole fruit and drink less juice.
- There are many healthy foods to choose from in this category. The serving sizes are quite small (about ½ cup/125 mL) so you might choose two servings of the same food (e.g. 1 cup/250 mL of cooked carrots).
- If you currently eat one serving per day, try to add a few more servings even if you don't get up to seven. Spread the fruits and vegetables throughout your meals and snacks.
- Look for lots of different colours. Try to include one dark green (e.g. broccoli, spinach, kale) and one orange (e.g. carrot, squash, sweet potato, pepper) vegetable each day.
- Some people with HIV may not be able to tolerate this many servings of fruits and vegetables because of the high fibre content. Eat what you can. (You can learn more about fibre in the *Practical Guide to Nutrition*.)



2

Then add grains 6 servings for women each day, 8 for men

- Include foods such as bread or bagels, pasta, hot and cold cereals, rice, barley, quinoa and couscous. A serving is about 1 slice of bread, ½ of a pita, or ½ cup/125 mL of rice, pasta or couscous.
- Spread the servings throughout your meals. For example, you might want to have two servings at each of breakfast, lunch and dinner. Extras can be added as snacks.
- Make most of your choices whole grain (e.g. whole wheat, oat, flax, millet, buckwheat, spelt and brown or wild rice).



3

Combine with milk products and alternatives

2 to 3 servings each day

- Include cow's or goat's milk, cheese, yogurt, kefir and milk alternatives (such as soy, almond or rice milk). A serving of cheese is 1½ oz/50 g; yogurt is ¾ cup/175 mL; cow's milk or soy milk is 1 cup/250 mL.
- If you need extra protein or calories or if you have osteopenia (thinner-than-normal bones), you might need more than three servings. (*The Practical Guide To Nutrition* has a section on bone health.)
- When choosing a milk alternative make sure it is fortified with calcium and vitamin D.



4

Serve with meat and alternatives

2 to 3 servings each day

- Include food from animals, such as meat, fish, poultry and eggs, as well as legumes (dried peas, lentils and beans) tofu, peanut butter, nuts and seeds. (*The Practical Guide To Nutrition* provides a long list of animal and vegetarian sources of protein and their serving sizes.)
- Choose three or more servings if you need extra protein.

Sprinkle lightly with fats and oils

- Aim for about 2 to 3 tbsps (15 to 30 mL) of added fats daily. This includes butter, oil, salad dressing, margarine and mayonnaise.
- Examples of healthy oils and fats include olive oil, canola oil, flax oil, nut oils, nuts and avocados. These contain more monounsaturated fatty acids and omega-3 fatty acids.



5

A sample food plan for one day

	FRUITS AND VEGETABLES	GRAINS	MILK AND ALTERNATIVES	MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES	FATS AND OILS
Breakfast					
½ cup (125 mL) berries	1				
1 cup (250 mL) bran flakes		1			
1 cup (250 mL) milk or ¾ cup (175 mL) yogurt			1		
Lunch					
1 cup (250 mL) vegetable soup	1				
1 cup (250 mL) green salad	1				
Salad dressing					1 tbsp (15 mL)
Chicken breast sandwich		2		1	1 tbsp (15 mL)
Afternoon snack					
Apple, mango or orange	1				
1 container yogurt (175 g)			1		
Dinner					
½ cup (125 mL) cooked carrots	1				
½ cup (125 mL) cooked broccoli	1				
1 cup (250 mL) brown rice		2			
Grilled fish				1	
Evening snack (good with meds)					
Banana	1				
1 small whole grain bagel		2			
Cheese (increase or decrease fat depending on meds)			1		2 tbsp (30 mL)
TOTAL	7	7	3	2	4 tbsp (60 mL)

Practical tips for healthy eating

Plan ahead. Start with planning the main meal of the day for the next two or three days. Work up to making a weekly menu. Make a list of the groceries you'll need.

Bring the list to the grocery store and have a snack before you go. Both will help keep you from making impulse purchases.

Don't purchase large packages of unhealthy foods that you can't resist.

Read the nutrition information and ingredients on food packaging. Your dietitian can help you learn how to interpret the information.

Carry healthy snacks. This will decrease the likelihood of needing fast food or junk food to curb sudden hunger.

Focus on more unprocessed foods and whole grains. Over time, you might find you skip the grocery aisles filled with processed foods.

Think about brushing up on your cooking skills. Open a recipe book and start with the basics. Simple foods from natural ingredients are not only healthier and easier to cook, they are often cheaper.

If you get paid once a month, stock up on foods like oats, peanut butter, canned fish, brown rice, pasta, canned lentils, black beans, baked beans, pea soup and frozen vegetables.

No fridge or stove? These foods are nutritious, keep well and require little or no cooking:

- bread or bagels
- peanut butter and nuts
- cereal and granola bars
- powdered milk
- canned salmon, sardines and tuna
- canned beans, vegetables and fruit
- rice cakes and crackers
- raisins, bananas and apples
- nutrition drinks

Join a community kitchen if there is one nearby. This is a good way to learn how to cook and save money on meals by sharing the cost. Going to one also makes meals more social, an important benefit of good nutrition.

Read "KISS in the Kitchen – 15 food groups to pack in your pantry" in the Spring/Summer 2004 issue of CATIE's *The Positive Side*, available at www.positiveside.ca.

To get your free copy of CATIE's *A Practical Guide to Nutrition for People Living with HIV*, call 1.800.263.1638 or visit www.catie.ca/ng_e.nsf

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