

A habit is merely an action or behaviour that is repeated. The more frequently the habit is repeated the more long lasting it becomes. This approach can be applied to a good habit or a bad habit. The body will simply follow what it is used to doing!



When it comes to good nutrition and eating healthy, changing one's eating habits may seem overwhelming and too difficult a task to manage. The key is to start slowly, create one habit at a time until it becomes automatic, and then gradually introduce more changes, one at a time. For example if more fruit is recommended in the diet, start by having one piece of fruit at the same time each day. The repeated action of having fruit will, with time, become part of everyday routine.

Below are examples of how to incorporate good eating habits:

- Set small **SMART goals** (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time bound). In other words, consider what specific habit you would like to focus on, how to go about it, is it 'do-able' and when to have achieved such goal).
- For example removing chocolate entirely from the diet is not a SMART goal, if there is no plan in place on how to go about achieving this goal. Instead a SMART goal approach would be "instead of chocolate I will have chocolate rice cakes" or "I will have chocolate at weekends, and during the week I will choose jam on toast instead of chocolate".
- **Repetition:** A habit will become part of regular behaviour by repetition.
- **Routine:** A good routine around mealtimes and snack times makes it easier to repeat good habits. Having meals at same time each day can help reduce fluctuations in appetite and allow for healthy snacks to be planned. A regular routine around food allows for planning of healthy snacks or indulgences!
- **Consistency:** establishing good habits requires consistency each day. Plan and agree ahead of time what meals and snacks to have and also when in the week to have planned special treats.