

Eating a balanced diet is easier than you think.

**E** “Balanced nutrition for adults simply means eating a balanced and varied diet every day,” said Ms Eliza Resurreccion, a nutritionist at The Nutrition Place.

She added: "Balance the food you eat with physical activities, maintain or improve your body weight and eat everything in moderation."

Mr Lim Meng Thiam, a manager and dietitian at the adult health division of the Health Promotion Board, added: "No single food provides all the nutrients needed for good health.

"Having a variety means eating different foods from the four food groups of the Healthy Diet Pyramid as well as within each food group."

The four food groups within the Healthy Diet Pyramid are rice and alternatives; fruit and vegetables; meat and alternatives; and fats, oils, sugar and salt.

We should ideally eat five to seven servings of rice or alternatives like cereal and noodles, two servings of fruit and vegetables, two to three servings of meat or alternatives and use fat, oil, sugar and salt sparingly per day.

Mr Lim said that food choices should be balanced over time.

He said: "After a high-fat lunch with lots of meat, go for a dinner that is lower in fat and contains generous amounts of vegetables."

In general, an adult man requires between 1,800 and 2,100 calories per day while an adult woman needs 1,500 to 1,800 calories per day.

Know the difference between

# Balancing act

A balanced diet is not hard to achieve. Just cut out the empty calories like cakes and go for nutritionally dense foods like spinach and salmon. **JUNE CHEONG** reports



FILE PHOTO

empty-calorie foods and nutritionally dense ones, Ms Resurreccion advised.

The former contain lots of energy but lack protein, vitamins and minerals. Examples include cakes, pastries and alcohol.

The latter refer to foods that are high in nutrients and low or

moderate in calories or energy.

Ms Jaclyn Reutens, a dietitian at Aptima Nutrition & Sports Consultants, said strawberries are an example of a nutritionally dense food. She said: "They're not only low in fat but also have anthocyanins which delay the ageing process."

"They have ellagic acid, a unique component which may reduce the risk of certain cancers and decrease cholesterol levels."

Other nutritionally dense foods include cold water deep sea fish like salmon and tuna, vegetables like spinach and carrots, wholemeal bread, low-fat milk and cultured milk drinks.

Asked if it is better to eat three main meals or several small meals a day, Ms Resurreccion said:

"Eating frequently helps regulate our blood sugar levels better through the day."

"When you are fuelling your body at regular intervals, you will have peak energy levels and no mid-day fatigue. Eating at regular intervals makes you feel full longer and prevents binge eating."

However, Ms Reutens said: "For a normal healthy adult, I would recommend three main meals evenly spaced out and at regular timings."

"Those concerned about their weight may have heard that eating every three hours increases the metabolic rate but this effect has not been well proven. What has been proven to work is eating regular meals three times a day with controlled portion sizes."

*junec@sph.com.sg*

Brought to you by

