

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO EATING RIGHT

UNDERSTANDING FOOD IS THE FIRST STEP TO BEING FIT, SAY CELEBRITY DIETITIANS AND NUTRITIONISTS BY KIRAN MANRAL

Sonam Kapoor, who battled a weight problem in her teens, is today happy to show off her svelte figure on the red carpet events. The actress believes in the importance of a healthy diet. "Life is always a high speed roller-coaster. So I set alarms to remind me when to eat," says she.

Pooja Makhija, consulting nutritionist and clinical dietitian who counts Sonam among her celebrity clients, believes the first step to eating right is to not be afraid of food. "Moderation is the key," she explains, adding, "The best way to lose weight or avoid health problems is to change your relationship with food. Make it your friend, not your enemy."

BUSTING MORE MYTHS

Rujuta Diwekar, dietitian to stars like Kareena Kapoor and author of two best-selling books on weight-loss, counsels clients against banning calories from their



"Bebo (Kareena) eats dal-chawal for dinner and that's the secret of her narrow waist-line," says Rujuta (inset).

diet. "Without adequate calories it's impossible to look energetic, all that you can look is aged," she says, adding the body needs carbohydrates to metabolise fat.

Namita Jain, clinical wellness specialist at Bombay Hospital and author of recent best-selling book *Four Week Countdown Diet*, recommends food labelled low-calorie be consumed in moderation. "Low fat does not mean unlimited. If you consume two low-fat yogurts, your calorie intake would be higher than one that contains full fat," she explains.

SMALL MEALS, BIG BENEFITS

Namita says nourishing your body through the day prevents extremes of hunger that lead to over-eating, binging and fatigue. "Work toward a pattern of six meals a day - breakfast, lunch, dinner and three snacks," she says, pointing out that smaller, frequent meals are easier on the digestive system, and that portions can be modified based on your body's signals.

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR FOOD

Both Pooja and Rujuta emphasise the importance of home-cooked meals. "If you don't cook at home, get somebody who does to share their food with you," Rujuta says, while Pooja adds, "You could also opt for a calorie-counted tiffin service." These services cater to specific needs, like a low fat, low sodium or high fibre diet.



Pooja's client Ekta Kapoor has hired an assistant to look after her dietary needs. "He scouts for the prescribed food wherever I am, travelling or shooting," says Ekta.

FROM LEFT: PHOTOCAMP; KIRTI SURVE/PARADE; YOGEN SHAH

MEAL PLAN



POOJA MAKHIJA
Consulting nutritionist and clinical dietitian



NAMITA JAIN
Clinical wellness specialist

BREAKFAST

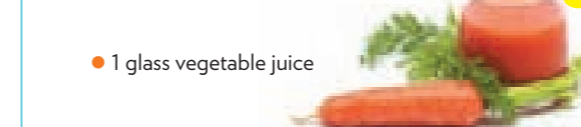


- 1 fruit (start your day with this) • 1 cup tea and 1-2 biscuits. • 1 egg and 1-2 bread slices (small) or 1 bowl poha or upma or cornflakes with milk

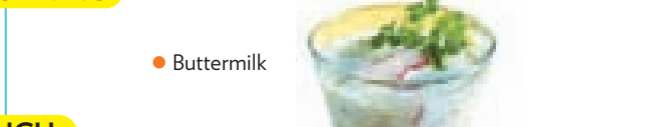


- Warm herbal tea, fresh fruits with low-fat yogurt (avoid mangoes, bananas, chikoos) • 1 whole grain toast

MID-MORNING



- 1 glass vegetable juice



- Buttermilk

LUNCH



- 2 small rotis, 1 bowl rice, 1 bowl vegetables, 1 bowl dal or chicken or fish • 1 fruit



- Soup (or vegetable juice), spout and salad with tofu, 1 whole-wheat toast

EVENING



- 1 cup tea and 1 biscuit • 1 bowl kurmura or popcorn • 1 fruit

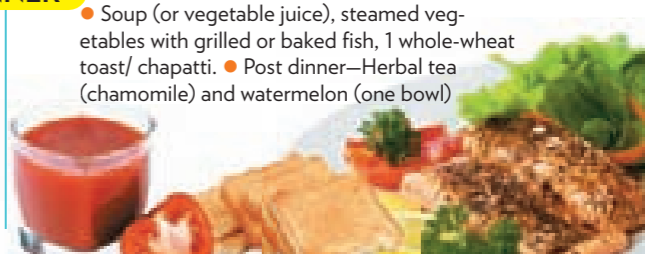


- Coconut water • Porridge—oatmeal/ broken wheat (one bowl)

DINNER



- 2 small rotis, 1 bowl vegetables, salad (with sprouts or chicken)



- Soup (or vegetable juice), steamed vegetables with grilled or baked fish, 1 whole-wheat toast/ chapatti. • Post dinner—Herbal tea (chamomile) and watermelon (one bowl)

WHAT TO EAT

Unlike Pooja and Namita who've shared a basic diet (see box), Rujuta does not believe in a fixed plan. "I have some basic rules around which I plan depending on my client's food preferences, geographical location, work hours, travel, lifestyle, etc," she says, adding the diet needs to be constantly modified to meet your nutritional requirements.

Namita advocates plenty of fruits and vegetables, steamed and grilled preparations and two litres of water every day to aid digestion. Rujuta champions local food to "exotic and unpronounceable cuisines". "The lesser your food travels to land on your plate, the lesser your navel travels from your spine," she says.

Discipline is key while working towards a healthy diet. "Refrain

from mindless eating," says Namita, recommending that packaged and refined food be substituted by more wholesome alternatives.

Actress Deepika Padukone, one of Pooja's clients, says once you master the art of eating right, it becomes a part of your life. "Then however crazy your schedules get, your body and health always comes first," she says. ●