

What About Food Supplements?

Supplements in the form of pills, powders or liquids are used to try to achieve certain goals. Sometimes people who restrict their intake of food think they can take a supplement (such as a vitamin pill) to cover their nutritional needs. This isn't true.



“Supplement,” means “in addition to.” Supplements are not meant to be and cannot serve as a replacement for food.

Sometimes people look to supplements for a quick fix to an eating problem. A good rule is, “If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.” If a product promises to “burn away fat” or “build up muscle,” steer clear.

Strength, stamina and health come from good nutrition and appropriate activity. You can't buy them in the drug store, health food store or from a magazine.



Vitamin, mineral, fiber or caloric supplements can be useful in promoting health. But it's best to discuss when and what to use with your health care provider.

Getting too much of a supplement can be much more harmful than not getting enough.

How Can You Help a Friend?

- **Emphasize the positive.** Point out strengths and compliment talents.
- **Be available** to listen and to care.
- **Don't comment** on your friend's (or anyone's) body size, weight loss, weight gain, etc.
- **Don't contribute** to conversations that focus on food, body size, calories, etc.
- **Express concern** about the person as a whole. Focus on your concern for his or her health and happiness rather than specific eating behaviors.
- **Don't give advice.** Being told what to do or not do can often provoke the opposite response, and your friend may become defensive.
- **Remind** your friend that people are important because of who they are, not how they look or what they do.
- **Encourage** your friend to seek help from professionals. Get help yourself if the stress of the situation is affecting you.

Who Can Help?

- **Your health care provider** is a good place to start. He or she can help you determine if there is a problem and find solutions.
- **Registered dietitians** can help with nutritional counseling.
- **Health educators** can provide information to maximize health and encourage health-promoting behaviors.
- **Mental health counselors** can help with perspective and change.
- **Many communities** have classes and groups on nutrition, body image and healthy eating.

This brochure is not intended as a substitute for your health professional's opinion or care.

Series Editor: Barbara A. Cooley, MA, CHES.

Text: Jane Simonsen, MD.

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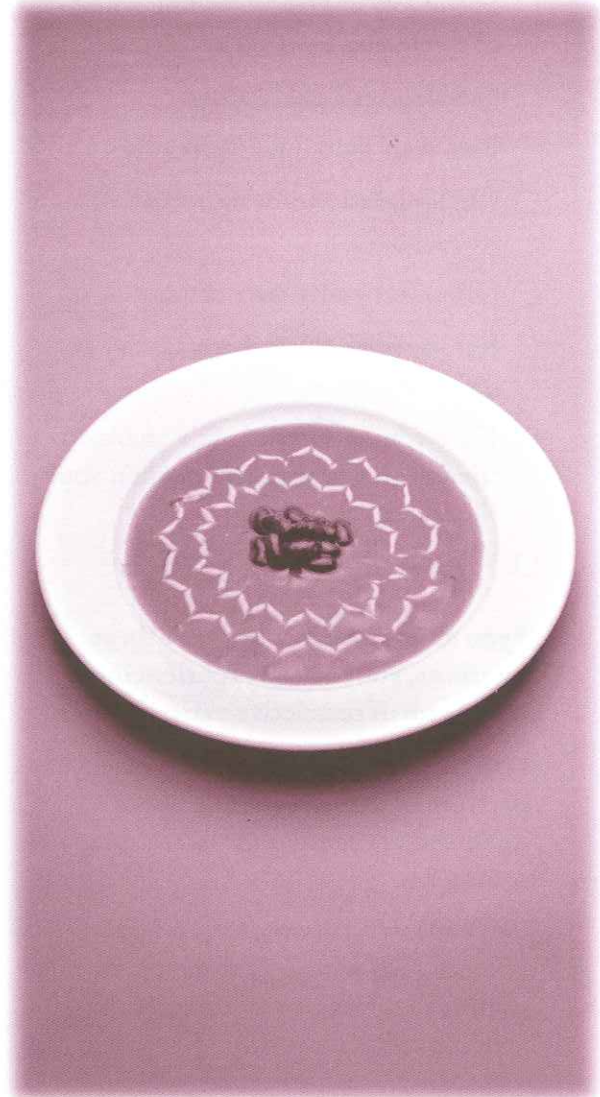
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HELP ON THE WAY

Restrictive Eating



Do You:

- Frequently skip meals?
- Eat regularly but severely cut back at one or all meals?
- Think about food all the time?
- Spend lots of energy reading about or discussing food-related topics?
- Feel deprived after eating?
- Plan your food intake precisely?
- Use laxatives and/or diuretics frequently?
- Often feel guilty after eating?
- Eat the same thing day after day or meal after meal?
- Have conflicts with family and/or friends over how much or when you should eat?
- Feel dissatisfied with your body?

If you answer “yes” to some of these questions, you may be experiencing some form of restrictive eating.

Restrictive eating can cover a whole spectrum of eating patterns—from occasional disregard of healthy eating to anorexia.

For people with anorexia, weight loss becomes such a focus that their lives, health, relationships and careers can be destroyed.

Who Is at Risk for Restrictive Eating?

Our society puts a great deal of emphasis on body image. Advertising and the media equate certain physical images with happiness and desirability in order to sell products.

Millions of people risk their health to get “the look” they see in ads and the media.

People may be at particular risk if they are

- under stress due to family, work, school or relationships
- pressured to look a certain way by others (coaches, employers, partners, parents, friends)
- unhappy with themselves
- looking for ways to control their lives



Why Is Restrictive Eating a Problem?

- **Restrictive eating can change metabolism.** This can make maintaining a healthy weight more difficult.
- **What begins as a small habit can get worse** and result in a more serious eating disorder.
- **Restrictive eating robs your body** of important nutrients. This, in turn, robs you of energy, strength and creativity.
- **Illness and infection** can happen more frequently.
- **Eating is often social.** Restricting your eating can lead to isolation.

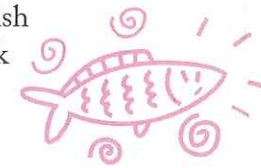
What Can You Do About Restrictive Eating?

LEARN ABOUT FOOD

Find healthy ways to nourish and fuel your body for peak performance.

You might need to learn:

- the right food plan for you personally
- the best mix of carbohydrates, proteins and fats for you personally
- how to eat a wide variety of foods each day
- how to read nutritional labels to maximize your nutritional intake



EXPLORE RESOURCES

Professional health care providers, counselors and registered dietitians can help.

You might need information on:

- steps to choose a more realistic, healthier image for yourself
- how to relax around food
- how your feelings affect and are affected by your food intake
- how your self-esteem may be involved in restrictive eating

SEEK SUPPORT

Talk to friends, family and caring professionals.

Health care providers, counselors and health educators can help you:

- explore healthy options
- find ways to put your body image and nutritional needs into perspective
- break unhealthy habits



Skipping a few meals here and there isn't necessarily a problem. But if the pattern becomes constant, automatic or disruptive, you need to take a closer look.