



Announcer:

It's time for the *IHSA Safety Podcast*.

Ken Rayner:

Welcome to the *IHSA Safety Podcast*. I'm your host, Ken Rayner. On this episode of the podcast, we're exploring practical nutrition tips surrounding the food we eat and the beverages we consume with IHSA's Holly Baril. Welcome to the podcast, Holly.

Holly Baril:

Thank you, Ken. Thank you for having me.

Ken Rayner:

Great to have you here. Just having you here today certainly prompted me to eat in a much more healthy fashion. I'd like to believe that I do eat normally pretty healthy, so I got up this morning and I had a lemon water, the first thing. I took the dogs for a nice long walk and then I came back and had a protein smoothie with a lentil wrap, pumpkin seed butter, and some natural strawberry jam with just strawberries and sugar. That's it. So I'm feeling good for doing this podcast on nutrition with you. I didn't get up and have a Pop Tart.

Holly Baril:

Yeah. Well, I'm glad that you thought of that before we did this podcast. At least you are conscious enough to make the right decision this morning.

Ken Rayner:

Yeah, yeah. I'm excited to get into this. I know you've got a lot of experience with this topic, so excited to do this with you. And it's interesting, we were talking about the word diet, Holly, and the root word of that word is die, which makes the thinking of going on a diet sometimes can be almost a morbid thought for people. But what we're going to talk about today, when you say the word diet, that's not what you mean today, right?

Holly Baril:

No. I don't really like the word diet, because you're right; a lot of people say, "Oh, I'm on a diet," or "I have to go on a diet," and they get a bad vibe from that word. So when I'm using the word diet in this podcast, what I'm going to be referring to, basically, is just the foods and the drinks that you have which make up your diet. So we're going to talk about different foods and stuff like that. So when I say diet, it's basically

just the food choices that you're going to make.

Ken Rayner:

Perfect. Great. Love the clarification. All right. And Holly, we've known each other for going on 15 years. How has becoming more educated on nutrition and its importance impacted you personally?

Holly Baril:

Well, I can say that my nutrition path started many years ago when I figure skated with Walt Disney's World on Ice. I was 18 years old--that's a long time ago. However, one of the things with skating with an ice show back then--and you have to remember the time that it was--there was a lot of emphasis on how you looked or how much you weighed. And it was a great experience. I was able to perform and figure skate across the United States to sold-out crowds. It was great; it was unreal. But again, one of their main focuses was on weight management and how much the skaters were supposed to weigh based on their height. So, again, these rules that were made up, today's day and age you would never see that, but back then that was kind of how they went by the rules.

And every week we would do what they would call a weigh-in. And when those weigh-ins would roll around, a lot of us skaters became very nervous, because if we were considered overweight, which a lot of times we were, it was posted for everybody to see, which was very embarrassing, to be honest with you. At the time, I was five-foot-seven and I literally weighed 117 pounds. So, thinking about that, at 117 I was very far from fat. So, the idea of being skinny was something that was ingrained in me, and I did suffer from an eating disorder because of that. My daily meals when I was skating with the ice show--this is really terrible, so this is not what I want you to do--back then it was a protein bar, an apple, and a Diet Coke.

That's it. There was really not much other food going on during the day because I was afraid come Saturday that this was going to be a bad experience for me again. Now, don't get me wrong, I loved skating with the ice show. It was a great experience. I would encourage people to do these things. Again, today's day and age, those requirements I'm sure no longer happen. So once I left the ice show, I came back home. I had to get some medical help with the very common problem of an eating disorder, and that's when I quickly realized that skinny does not equal healthy.

So I started going to a gym and properly learned how to lift weights and start eating better foods. At first it was hard to see myself gaining weight or getting bigger, but eventually I accepted my new look. And then in my mid-30s, I decided to compete in what was called a figure competition, so a figure bodybuilding competition. And then this was pretty much when my passion for fitness and nutrition began.

Ken Rayner:

Fantastic. Let's get into maybe a little bit about the composition of some of the foods we have. Carbohydrates, proteins, and fat. Can you explain some of the differences between those, Holly, and how they can contribute to overall health?

Holly Baril:

Sure. So the three main energy sources we have are carbohydrates, lipids, which is fat, and protein. So carbohydrates are made of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen and are a major source of fuel for the body. Dietary carbohydrates are the starches and sugars found in grains, vegetables, dried beans and peas, and fruits. The term lipids refers to substances we know as fats and oils, but also to fat-like substances in foods such as cholesterol and phospholipids. Dietary sources of lipids include the fats and oils we cook with or add to foods, the naturally occurring fats and meats in dairy products, and the less obvious plant sources such as coconut, olives, and avocado.

Protein is found in a variety of foods. Meats and dairy products are concentrated sources of protein. Grains, legumes, and vegetables are also sources of protein. Proteins are the main structural material in the body. They're also important components in the blood, cell membranes, enzymes, and immune factors. Proteins regulate body processes and can be used for energy. One main reason we eat food and the nutrients it contains is for energy. Every cellular reaction, every muscle movement, and every nerve impulse requires energy. Three of the nutrient classes--carbs, fats, and proteins--are energy sources. Other nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, and water are essential nutrients to our overall health and digestion.

Ken Rayner:

Right on. Great. And when we're talking about body composition, about being skinny or being potentially overweight, what we're really looking to do in this podcast is, if that works for you, that works for you. But if you're looking to make a change where you don't feel energetic during the day, you don't feel like you've got the proper fuel in your body to get through the day or do the activities you want to, then maybe taking a better look at your nutrition and what you put into your body might make sense for you, right?

Holly Baril:

Absolutely.

Ken Rayner:

So how does the quality of the food we eat impact our overall health and energy levels? Because everything you've mentioned so far, I haven't heard you say anything about making sure to eat highly processed foods. It sounds like everything you mentioned so far, Holly, was whole foods. So how does that quality, do you think, impact our overall health and energy levels?

Holly Baril:

The one thing a lot of nutritionists or nutrition people like to say is "if it comes in a box, it's probably not good for you." You've got so much sodium in there, and there's a lot of additives and that's not whole food. And it's hard nowadays. Food is so expensive, it's harder to get those nutritious and whole foods and be able to afford it, but that's kind of what we want to try and do. So, stick to that, try to stay away from the boxed stuff.

Ken Rayner:

You know what, Holly, it's kind of sad that the cheaper food is the processed food, which is the stuff that's not that great for you. And as we go through these times where people are struggling a little bit more economically and might have to gravitate towards unhealthier foods unfortunately. It's a shame that healthy foods aren't the best option or the cheaper option when it comes when we go to shop for food.

Holly Baril:

It's hard but it's doable. We can all grow small gardens in our yards that help us with things like lettuce and tomatoes and beans and cucumbers and whatever other fruits and vegetables that you're able to grow. And then we're saving money by not going to the grocery store for those things. And those are healthy foods to consume.

Ken Rayner:

Absolutely. Absolutely. And you know what, we're evidently going to have a hotter than normal summer this year in Ontario. So, great opportunity for people to have a little backyard garden and to grow their own vegetables. Fantastic. Anything else, in terms of the quality of food in that or how we eat the food or how we digest it?

Holly Baril:

Sure. When you have a bad food habit, as we know, bad habits are hard to break. It's no different when you love something bad and you're trying to change that. It's very hard to do that. Bad habits such as eating while watching TV, eating in the car, skipping breakfast, or eating too quickly are easy to develop and hard to break. But being aware of your behavior can help you take some steps forward toward positive change. As an example, if you are eating too quickly—and this is me 100 per cent, I have to tell myself this every time at dinner—slow down, relax, chew your food, and enjoy the taste of what you're eating. Don't be just shoveling it in too fast. It takes about 20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain that it's full. If you wait to stop eating until you feel full, which most people do, it's like, "Oh, I feel so full." You've already overeaten. So here's a question for our listeners. Do you eat to live or live to eat? So again, for all of us, eating to live is certainly true. There's many factors that affect our food choices and likes and dislikes. So these are actually really interesting factors here. So personal preferences, of course; a lot of people, maybe they don't like vegetables or things like that. Emotional and cognitive influences—this is your eating habits, comfort, or discomfort foods—you're having a bad day and you say, "Ah, man, I got to get that." For me it's a butter tart or chocolate covered almonds or something like that.

Food advertising and promotion. Think about when you're watching TV and the commercials that come on, I know for myself, it's always like bad food commercials, eating meals prepared outside of the house. So again, we talked about that, how you're going to go to a restaurant, you're going to order something. You have zero control over the amount of salt that's in there, what preservatives are in there. Talking about cheese, is it real cheese? What kind of cheese are they using? We don't have control over that.

Food and diet trends. There are so many different trends out there people try. They might work but as soon as they stop, that's it. It's done, right? Social factors and knowledge of health and nutrition. A lot of people just aren't well aware of health and nutrition and how to get that information. And then the last

one is the environment. Economics, we talked about that. Economics is huge. Food availability. So it's sad to say that there are some places in North America where maybe food availability or good quality food is just not there. Cultural influences and religion, these are all factors that can affect our food choices.

Ken Rayner:

I love that advice you gave about just slowing down. We think about the wisdom of generations that came before us. Having that lunch or that dinner meal where you're sitting down with family and it's a social event and you kind of go through your courses slowly, and you eat your food slowly, and we've kind of got away from that, right? It's like grabbing something on the go. I just need to grab a quick meal on the go. And then you're digesting it quickly, and as you said, you're filling up your body too fast, and so your brain's not telling you, whoa, slow down, stop. You're already full. You don't have to keep going.

So, I love that advice. Holly, maybe get into a little bit about the importance of balanced meals and the benefits of incorporating a variety of foods into our diet. I know one of the things that I sometimes get caught in a rut in is having the same thing over and over again and I know it's not great for me. I love having a smoothie in the morning but if I have put the same stuff in the smoothie every day, I'm not providing variety for myself. At least I think that's the case. Can you speak a bit about that?

Holly Baril:

Yeah, sure. I'll cover a couple of different points here. We know that what we eat does affect our health. That's 100 per cent proven. For example, eating foods with all of the essential nutrients prevents nutritional deficiencies such as a vitamin C deficiency or a vitamin B deficiency. In North America, a number of people suffer nutritional deficiencies as a result of dietary inadequacies. More often, they suffer from chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, hypertension, and diabetes, all linked to overconsumption of particular nutrients and lifestyle choices.

Living in a high-tech world, we expect immediate solutions to long-term problems. Wouldn't it be interesting if we could avoid the consequences of overeating by taking a pill or drinking a beverage? So, clearly we know there's no magic food, nutrient, or drug that exists. Instead, we have to rely on healthy foods, exercise, and lifestyle choices to reduce our risk of chronic disease, a task that challenges many.

Ken Rayner:

And Holly, even those prescription drugs out there that do offer those type of things. In fairness, they do come with typically side effects that could ... A person takes it for the right reasons and then they suffer something as a result of taking it. So going back to basics and just making sure you're putting good whole food nutrition into your body can hopefully help with that, right?

Holly Baril:

Yeah, for sure. There's all kinds of fads and diets out there, and they work, but again, they're not permanent. You want to make permanent changes to your lifestyle and your health, then they have to be permanent

Ken Rayner:

And sustainable.

Holly Baril:

Yeah, 100 per cent. Having an adequate diet means that the foods you choose to eat provide all the essential nutrients, fibers, and energy in amounts sufficient to support growth and maintain health. Many of us consume more calories than we need without getting 100 per cent of the recommended intakes for a number of nutrients. Take for example a meal of soda pop, two hard shell beef tacos, and a cinnamon breadstick. Although this meal provides food from different food groups, it is high in sugar and fat and low in many of the vitamins and minerals found in fruits and vegetables. Occasionally skipping fruits and vegetables at a meal does not create a vitamin or mineral deficiency. Not a big deal. However, dietary habits that skimp on fruits and vegetables most of the time provide an overall inadequate diet. Most people can improve the adequacy of their diet by choosing meals and snacks that are high in vitamins and minerals but low to moderate in calorie content.

Doing so offers important benefits like normal growth and development of children, health promotion for people of all ages, and reduction of risks for a number of chronic diseases that are a major public health problem. So when we talk about balance, and you were just talking about variety, a healthful diet requires a balance of a variety of foods. Grains, vegetables, fruits, oils, milk, meats, beans, energy sources, carbs, protein, fat, and other nutrients such as vitamins and minerals. Your diet can also be balanced in a complementary way when the foods you choose to eat provide you with adequate nutrients. The trick is to consume enough but not too much from all of the different food groups.

Ken Rayner:

And you mentioned grains, vegetables, fruits, oil—probably natural oil like avocado oil—or milk or meat or beans. All whole foods. You didn't mention anything that's processed in that, right?

Holly Baril:

No boxes.

Ken Rayner:

No boxes.

Holly Baril:

So the next trick here is calories. So, let's talk about calorie control. For many years, research supported the idea that weight loss and subsequent weight management relied on energy balance. So, which is the net difference between energy intake and energy expenditure? Current research is focusing more on diet composition rather than just total calories. So, just as each of us has a monetary budget, which is a limited amount of money to spend on things like our food, rent, transportation, or whatever else we spend on. In a sense, we all have a calorie budget as well. Think about this: every time you eat something, you are choosing to spend some of your calorie budget for that day. So those who spend their budget wisely tend to be healthier than those who don't.

Ken Rayner:

Calorie budget, I like that.

Holly Baril:

So, if you're going to eat more of your calories for breakfast, then you've still got a whole day to go where you're going to be eating your budget before bedtime, we'll say, and now you're at too many calories again. So the concern that our diets are becoming increasingly energy rich but nutrient poor has focused attention on the nutrient content of individual foods relative to the energy they provide. So, the nutrient density of food is the ratio of nutrient content to energy content. This measurement helps determine how healthy a food actually is. Nutrient-dense foods provide substantial amounts of vitamins and minerals and relatively few calories. Foods that are low in nutrient density supply calories but relatively small amounts of vitamins and minerals. So consider a baked potato. I like this example. This is really good. We can prepare a baked potato in many different ways.

We can eat baked potatoes, mashed potatoes with toppings—yummy yummy—or French fries. Depending on how it is cooked and what is added to it before we eat it, the nutrient density of a potato changes. So the most nutrient-dense form of this potato, which probably is boring for most people, would be a plain baked potato, which provides the most vitamins and minerals with relatively fewer calories. Now, clearly the least nutrient-dense version of this potato is French fries, because frying foods adds a lot more calories without adding more vitamins and minerals. French fries are not nutrient dense. They're a good snack here and there and a treat once in a while.

Foods with little added sugar or fat are high nutrient-density food choices. So, for example, you might decide to eat an apple instead of a handful of caramel corn. Although both provide about the same amount of calories, by choosing to eat the apple instead of the caramel corn, you are working towards meeting your daily nutrient needs while gaining more nutrients within the calories consumed, thereby selecting more nutrient-dense and overall healthier food choices.

Ken Rayner:

Yeah. I liked both examples, Holly, a lot. And I love French fries. Yeah, it's not the best way, not the best form of potato to eat. And then just the example comparing apple to caramel corn, that's great too because you can have the same amount of calories depending on how much you eat, but the nutrients that you're getting from that. Caramel corn obviously is very processed, whereas an apple just grows naturally. Yeah, so I love that example of those two. That's a really good way to highlight it.

Holly Baril:

And then if we think of what we said, the calorie expenditure. In that caramel corn, if it's 100 calories and the apple is the same, then you've eaten the same amount of calories, but you're getting more nutrients for the day. So the other thing is—this is huge—moderation. Moderation, I've got to tell myself that lots, too. Not too much and not too little. That's what moderation means. Also, moderation does not mean that you have to eliminate low nutrient-density foods from your diet, such as soft drinks and candies, but rather you can include them occasionally. Let's be realistic. I love my junk food too, every once in a while, but it's not part of my regular diet. And I might have a pop once in a while. Again,

not part of my regular diet. You don't want to eliminate things out of your diet, because that's just going to make you so unhappy that you're going to take 10 steps back when you're trying to move forward.

So, moderation entails not taking anything to extremes. Like I said, being moderate in your diet means that you do not have to restrict or completely eliminate any one type of food, but rather that all types of foods can fit into a healthful diet. It's okay to treat yourself once in a while. There may be better times to do so than others. Typically right after you've done an activity, your body is metabolizing things differently. So there could be a good time if you want a little cheat meal or pick a day of the week and give yourself the pleasure of that cheat meal.

So maybe it's Friday and you say, "You know what? We've had a long work week, and that's my reward." I love pizza. Maybe I'm speaking about myself. But anyway, that's what I'm going to have. And I'm okay with that because I've worked hard all week and that's my little reward, and it's okay. I'm not going to binge-eat it. I'm not going to eat the whole thing by myself, but I'm going to satisfy that desire and then I'm going to put it in the past and I'm going to move on.

Ken Rayner:

I appreciate that, Holly, because sometimes the food that isn't necessarily the healthiest for us, though, is what we crave and is what we savour, like a bag of potato chips sometimes, or a few potatoes. Not eating the whole bag but a few potato chips or something else savoury or something sugary. I appreciate that. So asking someone just to restrict all that to a degree doesn't work, I don't think. So, I'm glad that you're saying "Hey, look, let's be mindful about this. Let's try and put the proper fuel into our body that's going to give us the best result on a regular basis. But once in a while, hey, have some fun and have a little bit of a cheat meal where you can enjoy the things that maybe you like to eat but aren't, again, the things that are going to fuel your body to give you the performance you want."

Holly Baril:

Sure. We have to enjoy living, and those are the things that we enjoy. And if you're really concerned about diet and nutrition, and that's great, and you want to have maybe not so many cheat meals, then you want to look ahead at your calendar of life and think, maybe, oh, there's a birthday coming up. Oh, there's my cheat meal. I'm going to have some cake at that birthday. So that's okay to do that. We do not want to restrict ourselves. Like I said, it's going to make us hate this adventure, and it should be something that we enjoy doing. It makes you feel great when you eat well.

Ken Rayner:

Absolutely.

Holly Baril:

So I have a question for you though, Ken.

Ken Rayner:

Okay.

Holly Baril:

How many different foods do you eat on a daily basis? 10, 15?

Ken Rayner:

So I'd say today is probably off to a good start, given that I've had a lot of variety today. It's been very healthy, I think. I don't want to give one of those lawyer answers, but it depends, I think on just what's going on. If I have access to what I can make myself, probably greater variety. Yeah, it's probably to say about 15 different types. I'm just guessing. I haven't actually thought about it before, Holly. It's a good question.

Holly Baril:

And, I guess, just going off your answer, it would change. If I think about myself, depending on what I'm doing that day, whether it's work-related, I'm out of town, if I'm traveling, then it's different. But we want to make sure that we do include a lot of variety in our diet because it keeps things interesting, I guess, too. So not just different food groups such as fruits and vegetables and grains but also different foods from each of those food groups. So, eating two bananas and three carrots every day. Great, that gives you the minimum number of recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables, but it does not add much variety. So, we want to make sure that we're doing that. It's important for many reasons. Eating a variety of fruits, for example, provides a broader mix of vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals than if you eat the same one or two fruits most of the time.

So, it gives you a little bit of variety there. Choosing a variety of protein sources gives you a different balance of fats and other nutrients. Variety can add interest and excitement to your meals while preventing boredom with your diet. Perhaps most importantly, variety with your diet helps ensure that you get all the nutrients that you need. Again, there's no magic diet or food supplement. Instead, we want to make sure that overall long-term food choices can bring you the benefits of a nutritious diet.

A healthful diet is something you can create over time. It's not the way you eat on one given day. So, it's not, "Oh, today I ate great, tomorrow I'm going to eat badly." It's got to be continuous here. So using those principles of adequacy, balance, calorie control, nutrient density, moderation, and variety can help you attain and achieve healthy eating habits, which in turn will contribute to your overall healthy lifestyle.

Ken Rayner:

Perfect. What I took away from that advice is that I need to ensure more variety in what I'm doing. I can kind of get into the same routine. Even though I believe it to be healthy, I'm probably not changing it up enough to give me the benefits that you just talked about in regards to variety. So I appreciate that. Holly, how does nutrition play a role in performance and recovery, particularly for the workers in our membership who perform strenuous tasks and activities, maybe the same ones day in and day out, and those workers that sit for long periods of time in our membership?

Holly Baril:

Okay, so nutrition is number one. We've talked a lot about it and we're going to talk more about it. I'm going to get into a little bit of information here for combining the nutrition. So, if they're eating well, and then, maybe, a little bit more on recommendations for movement. So, when we're talking about workers who maybe sit all day or transportation workers or those doing the same activity, repetitive motion, we know that that causes MSDs [musculoskeletal disorders]. And so how can we reverse those effects? And I get it; it's sometimes very hard to meet minimum recommendations for exercise. But you've got to think that any level of physical activity is better than doing nothing at all. So get up, get out, and move. And again, if you're saying, "But I am a construction worker, I'm outside moving all day long." I know, but you might be doing the same thing over and over, and we want to reverse the effects of some of the MSDs you're maybe getting by incorporating different activity into your regular routine.

So three things that exercise should be promoting is strength, endurance, and flexibility. And optimal physical fitness also requires good nutrition practices. So, they go hand in hand. It's a combination of both. So just how physically active do you need to be? That's always a question I get. Well, how many times have I got to work out? Don't think of it like how many times you've got to work out. Think of it as, what can I do to improve my health? So the U.S. National Institutes of Health and Health Canada both found that small to moderate amounts of physical activity can produce substantial health benefits. Physically active people have a lower risk of developing many chronic diseases, such as coronary heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension and have an increased sense of well-being and are much better equipped to cope with stress.

Health Canada recommends choosing a variety of activities from the three different types of exercises: the endurance, flexibility, and strength. So, to develop an active lifestyle, we would try and do the following. Number one is really try and cut down on sedentary activity. Again, if you are a worker that sits all day, and then you get in your car and you drive home, and then you get home and you sit...we need to change that habit. Try and watch less TV and spend less time at the computer or on your phone. Try and avoid sitting for more than 30 minutes at a time. And I know this can be difficult at work, but consciously trying to have this in your mind might help. Two to three times per week, incorporate flexibility and strength. Stretching. Stretching is so important. Weight training is great for you as well.

And adding any type of leisure activities: golfing, bowling—anything leisurely. Then, if you can, three to five times per week, try and incorporate recreational sports. So something a little bit more intense—tennis, hiking—and then, maybe, aerobic exercises if you're up to that. And this can all start very slow. This does not have to be to the extreme where you want to pass out. Just start. Just start is the challenge there. Then again, like you said this morning, you went for a walk. Every day just get those extra steps in. Walking is so good for you. Now, most physically active people, anywhere from college students that are playing sports to the 50-year-old who enjoys walking, don't need necessarily special nutrition strategies. So, we talked about some of the things we need to do, and that's what we really need to stick with.

The American College of Sports Medicine says adequate food and fluid should be consumed before, during, and after exercise to help maintain blood glucose concentration during exercise and then maximize exercise performance and improve recovery time. So, here are a couple of tips I'm going to give, and in all honesty, you're going to notice it's very simple. Before you know you're going to go do something—so if you said, "Okay, I'm going to go for a hike, so I want to try and hydrate with water. I want to try and consume high protein and healthy fats within 30 to 60 minutes before I go. This gives me

time to digest.” More examples could be banana and nut butter, oatmeal with low-fat milk and fruit, yogurt and berries, or a handful of nuts. Nothing too extravagant. During my workout, I definitely want to keep hydrated with small frequent sips of water.

If you're going to be doing high-intensity workouts that last longer than an hour, we say eat small snacks every half hour. Small snacks. A little something to get you through it. This length of workout does not apply to someone just starting out. If you're just starting out, don't worry about high intensity for over an hour. This is more for people that are running in marathons. Marathon runners might have little snacks with them. They're running for hours on end. They've got to keep that energy level going. And then after the workout, this is when we need to replenish, and the sooner the better.

Preferably within 20 minutes you need to restore your hydration and electrolytes, replenish the glycogen in your muscles used during exercise, rehydrate with water, maybe some juice or low-sugar content sports drink, and complex carbohydrates and protein. What are some examples of that? Turkey sandwich on whole grain bread with veggies, or yogurt with berries. It's nothing too extravagant. If you follow this, a lot of it is hydrate, hydrate, hydrate, water, water, water.

Ken Rayner:

Yeah, it's interesting that you use the example of a 50-year-old who enjoys walking. And you know what? Getting out and exercising is huge, but I've found stretching. As I've gotten into my 50s, wow, what a difference. And particularly if the day before, perhaps I've really sat a lot and I just feel like I've got a whole bunch of stored energy in my hips and my glutes and my hamstrings, just getting down on a foam roller, rolling it out, and then doing a lot of stretching with bands makes me feel so much better.

I didn't need to do that when I was in my 30s. But now as I get into my 50s, I really feel like stretching is all that much more important. So, some great tips and things that, I can say, when I do them I 100 per cent feel better.

Now, you mentioned water and being properly hydrated. This is great. When we're launching this podcast it's going to be in the summer, and evidently it's going to be a hotter than usual summer. So, people are probably thinking about, how much water do I have to drink? Do you have some guidance on that?

Holly Baril:

Overall, water makes up 45-74 per cent of a person's weight. It's extraordinary. Water is the highway that moves nutrients and waste between cells and organs. It carries food through your digestive system, transports nutrients to your cells and tissues, and carries waste out of your body. So it's super important. Now the question is, how much water is too much? There's no real dead-set answer to that question, but we each need a different amount depending on our body size, body composition, activity level, and again, the temperature and humidity of the environment. The adequate intake for total water is 3.7 litres per day for men, and then 2.7 litres a day for women. So, if you wanted a number, then start with that number, and it's really not bad if throughout the day you've hit your 2.7 and you need more. That's okay. Maybe it's been a hot day, maybe you've been really busy and you need that water.

Otherwise, you start getting headaches and you feel faint, so, not good. You want to make sure you're consuming enough. Now, intake recommendations are higher for pregnancy and lactation, which would be between three liters and 3.8 litres. Now again, activity and sweating increases water needs. So athletes and active people, they're going to need much more water, especially if they work and train in warm, humid climates. Like even just our workers, our construction workers outside, they should be hydrating constantly. Now, water intake comes from a combination of drinking the water, other beverages, and water in our foods. So data suggests that 75-80 per cent of water intake comes from just drinking beverages and then 20-25 per cent from food. Fruits and vegetables contain a substantial amount of water. So, if you're not a fan of water, have some fruits and vegetables. They're full of water, which is going to help you with that intake.

Ken Rayner:

Right on. Now, you mentioned other beverages, and as I'm having a sip of my coffee mug, I'm thinking that there might be some drinks that you might say, ah, it's not going to provide you the sufficient hydration or nutritional value. You may want to consider limiting it or cutting back on it or avoiding it. So, I'm asking this question, I don't want to hear that it's coffee, Holly, don't tell me it's coffee. But again, you mentioned moderation earlier, right? Moderation. So, what are some things that we have to just be mindful about in regards to beverages?

Holly Baril:

Again, when we're talking about hydrating our body, we want to use things that are not diuretics. Anyone who regularly consumes alcohol probably realizes that it is a diuretic, a substance that increases fluid loss through increased urination. Now, we all like a glass here and there, and that's okay. Moderation, because alcohol, what it does is it suppresses ADH production, which is the antidiuretic hormone. And ADH helps your kidneys manage the amount of water in your body. It affects blood pressure and volume by regulating water content in the blood. And excessive alcohol consumption can cause dehydration with symptoms of thirst, weakness, dryness of mucous membranes, dizziness, lightheadedness, the common effects of what we call a hangover. So sorry, Ken, I'm going to ruin your day. But yeah, we got to talk about everyone's favorite beverage in the morning here, and that would be coffee.

So we know that a cup of coffee helps us in the morning, maybe a little pick me up, and some people are like, don't talk to me until I have my coffee. But we also know it is a diuretic, and caffeinated beverages can cause chronic mild dehydration. So I would suggest that if you can drink water in the morning before your coffee, if you're thirsty, have some water before, and then if possible, wait until you feel hungry to drink your coffee. So again, if possible, this is a sign that your adrenal glands have woken up and your coffee consumption will be more effective. Again, if possible, try to consume your coffee maybe with a couple of eggs. So some good protein there. Coffee on an empty stomach may send some people into adrenal overload.

Chronic to mild dehydration happens when there's a fluid deficiency of as little as one to 2 per cent of body weight, which is low. This causes decline in our alertness, the ability to concentrate while increasing feelings of tiredness, reducing physical performance, and again, causing headaches. Chronic underconsumption of water may play a role in many conditions such as constipation, asthma,

cardiovascular disease, and some forms of cancer and diabetes. I know that as soon as I feel a headache coming on, it's more than likely because I've either had coffee or something like that and then I have not replenished myself with water. And I am not big on taking Tylenol or Advil...I'll just drink water. And then I do notice, okay, I'm starting to feel better. I'm rehydrating myself.

Ken Rayner:

So I don't feel terrible after you just told me what I need to do with coffee. I'm actually doing some of that stuff today. I do get up and have water with lemon first and let that go through. And then I've started having coffee usually 90 minutes after I've woken up. So I'm allowing myself to wake up. I'm not relying on that caffeine right away and I'm having it typically about 90 minutes after I get out of bed. So I'm finding that's beneficial too, Holly. So that's been good. Okay, so when we go to the grocery store and we start to go up and down the aisles, one of the favorites for me is the cereal aisle because it seems like the grocery stores have strategically placed the cereal with high sugar and lots of preservatives at the front of the aisle, and then you have to walk all the way down to get to the healthier options.

And the big thing for me is, I'm now in my 50s. I better bring my reading glasses to the store if I want to read those labels, I need to make sure that this a good option for me. And if there's a whole bunch of ingredients in there that looks like it should be on the periodic table in chemistry, not in food, it's something that I don't really want to necessarily buy. So can you help us navigate nutrition labels effectively? How do we do that effectively when we're grocery shopping, Holly?

Holly Baril:

Yeah, this is a challenge for a lot of people. They either misread the label or don't understand what's on a label, so it can be very confusing. There's a few tips I'll try and give you here. They are useful in making food decisions. They provide us with standard information regarding important nutrients in a serving of packaged food. So this information can be helpful when we're looking for a particular type of food, or nutrients such as carbs. Or is it high in fibre? Something like that. So the label on food that you buy today has been shaped by many sets of regulations such as the health products and food branch of Health Canada.

Now, food labels must have five mandatory components and I'll break these down. The first one is a statement of identity or the name of the food. The net weight of the food contained inside the package —this does not include the weight of the package. The name and address of the manufacturer packet or distributor, nutrition information, and the statement of identity. So that requirement there, the statement of identity, means that the product must prominently display the common or usual name of the product or identify the food. For example, it would be very misleading to label fruit beverage containing only 10 per cent fruit juice as juice. So, we want to be careful with that. The nutrition facts panel informs the consumer about the nutritional value of a food product, enabling an informed shopper to compare similar products. So the heading "Nutrition Facts" stands out clearly. Just under the heading is information about the number of servings—so the serving size and the calories for that serving size.

This is where it gets confusing because we have to remember that if a serving size says half a cup...I always think of a rice packet, I don't know why. Half a cup of rice gives me this much stuff. If I eat a full

cup, then I'm doubling everything that's on that packet, which includes the fat, the calories, the salt, the carbs, all of it. So people don't think of that. They think, well, half a cup. Well, that's not a lot. Yeah, I know, but now you're doubling everything in there. So you're doubling the good, but you're also doubling the bad. The next thing that's confusing, I find, as well for most is the list of nutrients, which includes the daily percent values. So this can be confusing for some shoppers. These percentages are based on the value given for a 2,000 calorie diet. So 2,000 calories per day, that's what this is based on. So therefore, if your calorie intake is different, then you need to adjust these values appropriately.

Let's say, speaking of cereal, you rely on your breakfast cereals as a major source of dietary fiber intake, and we're going to compare two packages. So we find that the serving of cornflakes cereal has 4 per cent of the daily value for dietary fibre, but choosing bran flakes has given you 20 per cent. Now, by eating one serving of the cornflakes, you will only get 4 per cent of an estimated 100 per cent of your fibre needs for the day. If you choose to eat the bran flakes, then you get 20 per cent of the 100 per cent estimated needs of fiber for the day. It is confusing, but I think we have to take the time to read it and break it down.

Ken Rayner:

Yep, it is good. And the other advice, a piece of advice I get, don't go grocery stopping when you're really hungry.

Holly Baril:

Oh, no. Then you're eating pizza. You're buying pizza and chips and all the good stuff. So there's other associations here. You got the U.S. *Nutrition Labeling and Education Act*, and the associated U.S. FDA [United States Food and Drug Administration] regulations which allow food manufacturers to make nutrition content claims using a variety of descriptive terms on labels. You've probably read this—this is low in fat, this is high in fibre. They're allowed to do that. With the passage of the *Nutrition Labeling and Education Act*, manufacturers also were allowed to add health claims to food labels. So a health claim is a statement that links one or more dietary components to reduced risks of disease, such as a claim that calcium helps reduce the risk of osteoporosis. A health claim must be supported by scientifically valid evidence for it to be approved for use on a food label. Regulations require a finding or significant scientific agreement before the FDA may authorize a new health claim.

Food labels may also contain the structure/function claims that describe potential effects of food, food component, or dietary supplement component on body structures or function such as bone health, muscle strength, and digestion. Just as long as the label does not claim to diagnose, cure, or prevent diseases, a manufacturer can claim that a product might help promote immune health or energizes you, if some of that evidence can be provided to support their claim. So again, the nutrition information on everything could be very confusing, but you've just got to take the time to break it down and look at it and focus on the important parts.

Ken Rayner:

And you know what? It's the way for the food manufacturers to give their sales pitch. So just be mindful of that. If something says it claims to do this, claims to do that, then just give it a good read and see if it makes sense. What about some practical tips? You've given us so much guidance already, Holly, in terms

of what to look for when you go into the store, eating in moderation, or making sure you've got balance and variety in your meals. Maybe some practical tips for just incorporating healthier eating habits into our daily lives, just making us feel better, some practical stuff that we could start doing tomorrow.

Holly Baril:

Okay, you're going to like this information. This is really interesting here. So according to the U.S. National Institutes of Health, a portion of food is defined as the amount of food that you choose to eat at one time, whereas a serving, which is on our packets, is a specific amount of food or drink that is listed on food labels. So your portion is what you eat. A serving is what they tell you that you should be eating.

Over the past few years, portions have grown significantly in supermarkets, restaurants, and even in our own homes. So many factors contribute to our growing waistlines, but one observation in particular cannot be overlooked, and that's the incidence of obesity that has increased in parallel with increasing portion sizes. Adults today consume an average of 300 more calories per day than they did in 1985. In almost every eating situation, we are confronted with huge portions which are now perceived as normal or a great value. So we've created this perception that large portion sizes are appropriate, creating an environment of portion distortion. So we find portion distortion in restaurants. Think about when you go out for dinner, where the jumbo sized portions are consistently 250 per cent larger than the regular portions.

Ken Rayner:

Supersize my fries.

Holly Baril:

Oh, wow, right? We even find portion distortion in our own homes where the sizes of our bowls and glasses have steadily increased, and where the surface area of the average dinner plate has increased 36 per cent since 1960. Consuming larger portions can contribute to weight gain and ultimately can result in obesity. You look at your coffee cup, it's bigger, and so are your plates, your wine glasses.

Ken Rayner:

Your wine glasses.

Holly Baril:

Exactly. I'm just going to have a glass of wine. Oh, there goes half the bottle.

Ken Rayner:

But you know what's interesting, Holly, when we were just mentioning that, I just grabbed the calculator really quick and took, because someone may go, "Ah, 300 extra calories a day doesn't sound like that much," but if you times it by 365 days in a year, it comes out to about 110,000 calories. That's a lot over the course of a whole year. That's a significant difference.

Holly Baril:

Now take that and take bad eating habits and sitting; not exercising—we're not doing any good for ourselves at all.

Ken Rayner:

Yeah, it's amazing. You go back and if you can see some videos and whatnot, shots of let's say beaches, public beaches and things like that back in the 1960s. The body composition of those pictures is very different than what we have today. And you have to believe it has to do with what we're putting into our bodies and the fact that we're just not moving as much as we did. So yeah, we've come to a point where maybe hopefully there's going to be an awakening and people are going to get back to good habits again.

Holly Baril:

There's a couple of things here that Health Canada's food guide recommends, and again, it's not hard to do. You have to get into the habit of doing it and thinking about it. So one of the things is try and at least eat one green and one orange vegetable a day. Okay, so I'll be honest, orange vegetable, it's hard. There's not that many I'm sure, but try something.

Enjoy vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar, or salt. Eat vegetables and fruits more often than the juices themselves. Select whole grains for at least half of one's grain products. Choose grain products that are low in fat, sugar, or salt. Drink skim milk, 1% or 2% milk each day, so drink milk. Consume meat alternatives, so, beans, lentils, and tofu. Eat at least two food guide servings of fish each week. Select lean meats and alternatives prepared with little or no added fat or salt. Include a small amount of unsaturated fat each day. Satisfy your thirst with water and limit foods and beverages, high in calorie, fat, sugar, or salt, and be active every day.

Ken Rayner:

So we do use salt at home, but we have transitioned to using Celtic sea salt as opposed to iodized, which is kind of like table salt. So just being a little bit more mindful about the type of salt we use when we do use salt. I think that helps to contribute a bit to that.

Holly Baril:

Yeah, there is a difference in the type of salt that you use. And salt's not bad for you. Just high amounts of salt are bad for you.

Ken Rayner:

Yeah, absolutely. So Holly, we're not as young as we used to be. At least, I'm not, I shouldn't include you in with me. That's not fair. But your approach to nutrition must have changed a lot from when you were younger to now. And I think it's got to be more important as we age, because we just don't seem to have that same energy store that we did when we were toddlers, when we were young, and we were teenagers. And as we get into our 50s or 60s, and you start to...I think nutrition is that much more important, isn't it?

Holly Baril:

I think it's definitely important at all ages. But again, as you're aging, your metabolism slows down. Like you said, your energy levels, even strengths—I go to the gym all the time, and lately I feel weaker than I normally would. But it could be just that as well. Just aging. And that's what it does. It breaks down those muscles and things like that a little bit quicker, and it's harder to get that back. So you got to work a little bit harder. But it is important to have the proper knowledge about nutrition.

You think about little kids, they're willing to try new things. They are. They're willing to try anything, generally after repeated exposure. They might like it or might not like it. But they also need to be exposed to a variety of foods to ensure that they're getting the proper nutrients and limit the consumption of sugar sweetened beverages and calorie-dense snack foods. And sometimes you see kids that eat maybe not so good, and maybe they're just picky eaters, and that's okay, but you got to find a way to work around that to get them the benefits of nutrients in their bodies.

Ken Rayner:

Yeah, agree. For our kids, we used to have to make homemade soup because they wouldn't eat vegetables to a degree. So yeah, I agree. Just find another way to get that nutrient into their systems.

Holly Baril:

Yeah, 100 per cent. You've got to start that out when they're young, because again, they're developing those good eating habits and even exercising, going outside to play, riding their bikes. That's very important. So again, as we grow older, nutrition and exercise become even more important. So lean body mass and strength are commonly observed to decline with age, which is what I was saying. This is normal. But although physical activity cannot stop our biological aging, regular exercise can at least help to minimize the effects of a sedentary lifestyle. Poor food choices and too many calories combined with sitting have resulted in a growing number of overweight and obese older adults, and then they're at higher risk of chronic diseases and cancer.

Those of us that are entering our mature ages, thanks Ken, we're trying to do that, trying to be lean, trying to do that, and we remain lean as a result of a healthy, active lifestyle. This will increase our chance of enjoying being healthy as we age. So there is moderate evidence that an active lifestyle will lower the risk of hip fracture and increase bone density, lower the risk of cancers, and improve sleep quality. There's strong evidence that an active lifestyle can lower the risk of early death, lower the risk of high blood pressure, even prevent weight gain, improve cardio and muscle fitness, prevent falls, and reduce depression. So basically, physical activity helps adults maintain their health and independence as they age.

Ken Rayner:

Holly, are there some tools or some links that we want to point to in this podcast that we can put up on the podcast channel which people can reference after hearing this talk, and hopefully that some of our listeners have said, "Hey, all right, Holly, I've listened to your advice and guidance and I want to explore this a little bit further."

Holly Baril:

Sure. A couple of places you can get some great information are MyPlate—that's one website—the other one is Canada's food guide. And then just visit a website called Myths about Alcohol. Something to read up on.

Ken Rayner:

And you've covered so much, but do you want to just end with a few practical tips that you want to just really leave in the minds of our listeners?

Holly Baril:

Yeah. I always say this to people—it's really simple. It's not that hard. Watch your portion size. Eat till you're full, stop. You may not need to snack at 8 o'clock at night. Limit your sugar intake. Incorporate a variety of foods and keep it interesting. Eating meals should be fun and interesting. Always eat greens or veggies with your meals or at least at lunch and dinner. Try your best to incorporate those. And honestly, just get moving. Do something.

Ken Rayner:

Fantastic. Hey, Holly, I know the passion you have for this topic, and I really appreciate you giving all this guidance to our members and our listeners, to help them feel better during the day so they can perform at their best and just enjoy life. That's what it's all about, right? So Holly, thanks so much for joining the *IHSA Safety Podcast*.

Holly Baril:

Thank you, Ken.

Ken Rayner:

All right. And thanks to the listeners to listening to the *IHSA Safe Safety Podcast* and our episode on nutrition. Be sure to subscribe and like us on your podcast channel and visit us at IHSA.ca for a wealth of health and safety resources and information.

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