THE BEST FOODS FOR A HEALTHY DIET

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Abstract. Unhealthy diets are one of the main factors in the increasing prevalence of obesity and chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease in many countries, including Indonesia. In this context, choosing the right type of food is a strategic step in supporting the success of a healthy diet. The purpose of this paper is to identify and explain the best foods that contribute to weight loss, maintain overall health, and prevent the risk of chronic diseases through a balanced nutrition approach. The method used is a literature study with a descriptive analysis approach, which reviews a number of scientific references such as health journals, nutrition books, and trusted academic articles. The results showed that green vegetables, fruits, low-fat protein, nuts, seeds, complex carbohydrates, low-fat yoghurt, and green tea contain nutrients such as fiber, antioxidants, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals that are instrumental in supporting metabolism, controlling blood sugar levels, strengthening the immune system, and reducing the risk of degenerative diseases. The discussion in this paper emphasizes that a healthy diet is not only limited to calorie reduction, but should also include a diversity of nutritious foods consumed consistently. In conclusion, adopting a diet that prioritizes highly nutritious foods, coupled with a healthy lifestyle, will result in significant long-term benefits to an individual's health and quality of life.

Keywords: Healthy Diet, Food, Nutrition Fulfillment.

INTRODUCTION

In a modern era characterized by fast-paced lifestyles and instant food consumption, public awareness of the importance of maintaining a healthy body through a balanced diet is increasing. One aspect that has become a major concern in a healthy lifestyle is diet, which is the regulation of diet that aims to achieve an ideal body condition, both in terms of weight and overall health (Cena & Calder, 2020). A healthy diet is not just about reducing food portions or avoiding fatty foods, but a broader and more comprehensive approach that involves choosing the type of food, timing meals, and optimally fulfilling the body's daily nutritional needs. The food consumed in the dieting process plays a central role as its nutritional content directly affects metabolism, immunity, and hormonal balance that play a role in weight regulation and other bodily functions. The phenomenon of increasing cases of obesity, type 2 diabetes mellitus,

hypertension, and heart disease in various parts of the world shows that people's lifestyles and eating habits have undergone a drastic shift (Cruz et al., 2022). Excessive consumption of foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fat, as well as low consumption of fiber and other essential nutrients, has been shown to be one of the main causes of these chronic diseases. Therefore, proper food selection is necessary, especially for individuals who want to undergo a healthy diet program consistently and sustainably. A healthy diet not only aims to lose weight, but also maintain stable blood sugar levels, improve lipid profiles, strengthen the immune system, and maintain the health of vital organs such as the heart, liver, and kidneys.

With the growing interest in healthy eating, various foods are being recognized and promoted as the "best foods for dieting". These foods are usually high in nutrients but low in calories, rich in fiber, have a low glycemic index, and contain natural antioxidants that can counteract free radicals in the body. Some of these include green vegetables, colorful fruits, whole grains, healthy fatty fish like salmon, nuts, and fermented foods that support digestive health. In addition, understanding the composition of nutrients such as complex carbohydrates, lean proteins, healthy fats, as well as micronutrients such as vitamins and minerals, is crucial in developing a diet that supports a healthy diet. However, there are still many challenges faced in implementing a healthy diet in the community. Low nutrition literacy, the influence of social media that often displays diet information that is not based on scientific evidence, and the tendency of people to follow extreme diet trends without considering the long-term effects, are obstacles. Therefore, it is important to disseminate an accurate and science-based understanding of the foods that are best for a healthy diet. In this paper, the author reviews the best foods that support a successful healthy diet, based on balanced nutrition principles and current scientific evidence, and provides a comprehensive overview of the health benefits of each food group in the context of diet. Thus, it is hoped that this paper can be a useful source of information for readers in designing a healthy diet that is not only effective for losing or maintaining ideal body weight, but also improving quality of life and preventing the risk of chronic diseases in the future.

THEORITICAL REVIEW

Healthy Diet in Supporting Health and Disease Prevention A healthy diet is a fundamental aspect in maintaining the balance of body functions and preventing various chronic diseases. As public awareness of a healthy lifestyle increases, attention to the consumption of nutritious foods is also growing. A healthy diet includes a balanced intake of various food groups, such as fruits, vegetables, quality protein, whole grains, and healthy fats. According to the article (Best Foods for a Healthy Diet 2023), foods such as berries, dark green leafy vegetables, and fatty fish such as salmon, contain antioxidants, omega-3 fatty acids, and high fiber that can support heart health, brain function, and the immune system. Various scientific studies also support the importance of implementing a healthy diet consistently. A study by (Sun et al. 2025) in Nature Medicine showed that dietary patterns such as the Alternate Healthy Eating Index (AHEI) are closely related to increased chances of healthy aging and reduced risk of chronic diseases. "Adherence to healthy dietary patterns in midlife is associated with higher odds of healthy aging," said Sun and his team in their study. This proves that diet not only has a short-term impact, but also affects quality of life in the long term.

In addition, consumption of plant-based foods—such as nuts, grains, and vegetables—contributes to reducing body inflammation. (Chen et al. 2025) in the journal Nutrients stated that intake of plant protein and fiber significantly reduced levels of C-reactive protein (CRP), an indicator of inflammation that triggers various degenerative diseases. This positive impact explains why a plant-based diet is increasingly recommended in disease prevention approaches. However, the increasing consumption of ultra-processed foods is a challenge in itself. (Hall et al. 2025) in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine highlighted that every 10% increase in calories from ultra-processed foods is associated with a 3% increase in the risk of premature death. Products such as processed meat, fast food, and packaged snacks contain additives such as nitrite and high sodium which can trigger cancer and heart disease. (Johnson 2025) from EatingWell stated that preservatives in processed meat can form carcinogenic compounds called N-nitroso which damage DNA and trigger tumor growth, especially in the colon.

Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of adopting a healthy diet as part of a sustainable lifestyle. A healthy diet not only meets the body's nutritional needs, but also plays an important role in preventing disease, strengthening the immune system, and improving overall quality of life. Interventions based on nutritional education, developing positive eating habits, and limiting consumption of ultra-processed foods are the main strategies in building a healthier and more productive society.

RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

The research method used in writing this article is a descriptive analysis method with a literature study approach. This method was chosen because it is in accordance with the main objective of the article, which is to systematically explore, explain, and organize information about the best types of foods that can support the success of a healthy diet based on previously published data and scientific findings. In this context, a descriptive approach is used to describe and explain the characteristics of certain foods - in terms of their nutritional content, health benefits, and role in weight management and disease prevention. Through descriptive analysis, the author not only describes the information narratively, but also attempts to present the linkages between theories, facts and findings from various sources that have been identified.

The data collection process was carried out by exploring various relevant scientific literature, such as health and nutrition journals, research reports, academic articles, reference books, and publications from health institutions. The selection of literature study as the basis of the research provides flexibility for the author to examine various scientific perspectives on foods that are ideal for a healthy diet, ranging from the type and content of nutrients, glycemic index, effects on body metabolism, to recommendations for ideal consumption patterns in the context of modern lifestyles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In an effort to maintain a healthy body and achieve an ideal weight, the choice of food consumed daily is a very important aspect to consider. A healthy diet is not just about reducing portions or drastically limiting calorie intake, but rather how one organizes a diet based on nutritional balance and the body's nutritional needs. One of the keys to success in a healthy diet lies in the consumption of foods that are nutrient-rich,

low in calories, and have long-term benefits on body function. The ideal foods for a healthy diet are foods that contain high fiber, quality protein, healthy fats, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that can support the body's metabolism and prevent various risks of chronic diseases (Alahmari, 2024).

One food group that is a mainstay in a healthy diet is green vegetables. Vegetables such as spinach, broccoli, kale, and carrots, are known to contain various important vitamins such as vitamins A, C, and K, as well as essential minerals such as magnesium and calcium that the body needs to maintain muscle, bone, and immune system function. The fiber content in green vegetables is also very high, which is useful for facilitating the digestive process, keeping blood sugar levels stable, and helping to provide a longer feeling of satiety so it is very effective in preventing excessive food consumption. In addition, green vegetables also contain natural antioxidants that can fight free radicals and play a role in the prevention of heart disease and cancer. This combination of vitamins, fiber, and antioxidants makes green vegetables a highly recommended component of any healthy diet program (Syed et al., 2023)

Apart from vegetables, fruits are also an important food source that should be consumed regularly in a healthy diet. Fruits such as avocados, apples, bananas, strawberries and watermelon have a wide variety of nutritional content. Avocados, for example, are rich in monounsaturated fats that are beneficial for lowering bad cholesterol levels and maintaining a healthy heart (Okobi et al., 2023). Meanwhile, apples and bananas contain soluble fiber that helps control appetite and improve the digestive system (Ioniță-Mîndrican et al., 2022). S Troberi and other colored fruits are known to be high in antioxidants, especially vitamin C, which helps boost immunity and accelerate the process of cell regeneration. Watermelon, which is rich in water, helps to keep the body hydrated, especially for those who undergo physical activity in the process of dieting. Fruits, in general, help maintain the balance of nutrients in the body, increase the intake of vitamins and minerals, and provide a more natural sense of satiety with relatively low calories.

Another food group that is equally important in supporting a healthy diet is low-fat protein sources. Foods such as skinless chicken breast, hard-boiled eggs, salmon, and lean beef, are the top choices that are widely recommended in diet programs due to their high protein content and low saturated fat. Protein serves as a building block for body cells, helps speed up metabolism, and plays a role in the formation and repair of muscle tissue, especially when one is losing weight. Protein consumption is also known to suppress hunger longer, as it takes longer for the body to digest. Fatty fish such as salmon contain omega-3 fatty acids which are essential for heart and brain health and have strong anti-inflammatory effects, which are useful in preventing chronic diseases such as high blood pressure and chronic inflammation (Banaszak et al., 2024).

In a healthy diet, nuts and seeds also play a huge role. Foods like almonds, walnuts, peanuts, chia seeds, and flax seeds are known to be rich in plant-based protein, fiber, healthy fats, and micronutrients like vitamin E, magnesium, and zinc. The fiber content in nuts helps slow down the digestive process and provides a long-lasting feeling of fullness, which is helpful in controlling daily calorie intake. In addition, the healthy fats found in nuts, especially polyunsaturated fats, are known to lower LDL cholesterol levels and increase HDL cholesterol, which directly supports heart health. The combination of protein, fiber and healthy fats makes nuts and seeds an excellent healthy snack to suppress hunger between main meals, while meeting daily nutritional needs (George et al., 2022).

From a nutritional perspective, the combination of these foods can provide a wide range of benefits to the body. The high fiber content in vegetables, fruits and whole grains aids digestion and prevents constipation and plays an important role in maintaining body weight. Antioxidants found in fruits and green tea help protect the body's cells from oxidative damage associated with premature aging and degenerative diseases. Omega-3s in fish and healthy fats from nuts help maintain cholesterol balance and lower the risk of heart disease. Meanwhile, lean protein is essential in maintaining muscle mass, especially when the body is in a calorie deficit. In addition to supporting weight management, a healthy diet that prioritizes natural and highly nutritious foods is also scientifically proven to reduce the risk of various chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, cancer, and cardiovascular disease (Clemente-Suárez et al., 2023). Fiber helps lower cholesterol levels and slows the absorption of sugar, making it good for diabetics and those at high risk. The balanced nutrient content also helps keep the body's organs functioning optimally and supports the immune system to fight disease.

By adopting a diet consisting of a wide variety of the best foods for a healthy diet, one will not only achieve a sustainable ideal weight, but also improve overall quality of life. However, it is also important to emphasize that the success of a diet depends not only on the type of food, but also on the overall lifestyle. Regular physical activity, adequate sleep, good stress management, and avoiding the consumption of processed foods, foods high in sugar and trans fats are integral to a healthy lifestyle (Arora et al., 2023). Therefore, an effective and sustainable healthy diet should not be viewed as a short-term endeavor, but as a form of commitment to living a more balanced and quality life.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion that has been described, it can be concluded that the success of a healthy diet depends on choosing foods that are not only low in calories, but also rich in essential nutrients such as fiber, protein, healthy fats, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Foods such as green vegetables, fruits, lean proteins, nuts, seeds, complex carbohydrates, low-fat dairy products, and green tea have comprehensive nutritional benefits in supporting weight management, maintaining metabolic balance, and preventing chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and cancer. Fiber content in vegetables, fruits, and grains is proven to provide a longer feeling of fullness, control blood sugar levels, and facilitate digestion. Meanwhile, protein functions in muscle building and metabolic hormone regulation. Antioxidants found in green tea and colored fruits provide protection against free radical damage to cells. The combination of all these foods, if consumed in a balanced and consistent manner, will form a healthy diet that is not only beneficial in the short term for weight loss, but also in the long term for strengthening the immune system and improving overall quality of life.

THANK-YOU NOTE

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