NUTRIENT DENSITY

NUTRIENT DENSITY refers to how many and which nutrients are in a food item. It measures how healthful a food is and can be a valuable tool to navigate nutrition. Not to dictate if foods are good or bad. Think about the "package" the food comes in. Not the wrapping, but what comes alongside: fats, fiber, sodium, vitamins, and minerals.

CONSIDER ASKING

How could I prepare this item in a more healthful way?
How could I consume this item in a more healthful way?
What could I do to add nutrition to this item or meal?

CHOOSE FOODS That have more complex carbohydrates instead of simple carbohydrates or added sugar. That have more vitamins and minerals. That have unsaturated fat instead of saturated fat. That have naturally occuring sodium, instead of added sodium. That have fiber (like leafy greens and whole grains).

EXAMPLES:

POTATO CHIPS have 10 grams of saturated fat per serving and 200 mg per serving.

ROASTED POTATOES have more potassium than processed potato chips. They have 4 grams of fiber if eaten with skin on. Sodium can be altered to taste and they can be cooked in olive oil (an unsaturated fat) instead of saturated fat.

SIRLOIN STEAK is a great source of protein—about 33 grams worth. But it also delivers about 5 grams of saturated fat.

HAM has 22 grams of protein and only 1.6 grams of saturated fat, but it's loaded with 1,500 mg worth of sodium.

COOKED LENTILS provides about 18 grams of protein and 15 grams of fiber, and it has virtually no saturated fat or sodium.