



Tips for Enjoying Healthy Hotpot

Many restaurants offer all-you-can-eat hotpot deals to attract customers in autumn and winter. However, people often overeat easily with the joyful atmosphere. Additionally, many common hotpot ingredients are high in energy and fat. Overconsumption of such ingredients would lead to imbalanced nutrition. In fact, having hotpot can also be healthy as long as the soup bases and ingredients are wisely chosen.

Choose healthier soup bases

Soup bases like pork bone soup and Sichuan-style spicy soup are relatively greasy. Together with the oil released during the cooking of meat, the fat content of the soup base would further increase. Excessive intake of fat can result in weight gain and obesity. In addition, meat contains a considerable amount of saturated fat. Overconsumption of saturated fat would increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Recommendations: To reduce the intake of fat, choose clear soup such as tofu and coriander soup, tomato and potato soup or carrot and sweet corn soup. Avoid drinking the hotpot soup base after the meat has been cooked.

Increase the portion of vegetables and grains

In accordance with the principle of healthy eating, more grains and vegetables should be consumed in the diet. However, when choosing hotpot ingredients, most people go for fatty and processed meats, such as fatty beef, mutton, meat dumplings with fish skin, cuttlefish balls and sausages, thereby increase the intake of fat and sodium.

Recommendations:

- Include a variety of vegetables as the hotpot ingredients, such as leafy vegetables, radish, shiitake mushrooms and enoki mushrooms. Bear in mind that vegetables should take up a larger portion of the ingredients, while meat should only take up a smaller portion.
- Include grains such as udon noodles, rice noodles and shirataki (konjac) noodles to increase satiety and minimise the chance of overeating meat due to hunger.
- Choose low-fat meats and alternatives such as fresh fish slices, seafood, beef shank and tofu. In terms of portion, it is advisable to consume three to four taels (i.e. the size of three to four table tennis balls) of meat per meal per person. If you are going to have hotpot in the evening, you can reduce the consumption of meat for lunch and save the quota for dinner.

Cut down on the use of seasonings

When having hotpot, some people dip the food in high-sodium sauces, such as sachau sauce or satay sauce. However, excessive intake of sodium increases the risk of developing hypertension.

Recommendations: Cut down on the use of seasonings whenever possible to enjoy the authentic and fresh flavour of the ingredients. If you find your food bland, you can prepare a dipping sauce by mixing little soy sauce with spring onion, ginger, garlic or chili.

Cut down on the consumption of sugary beverages

Most people drink sugary beverages such as soft drinks, juices, sour-plum drink and sugar cane juice when having hotpot. However, it is advisable to consume these beverages as little as possible to avoid weight gain caused by excessive intake of energy and sugar.

Recommendations: Replace sugary beverages with water, sugar-free tea or other low-sugar drinks. Reduce the amount of sugar added when preparing homemade Chinese beverages such as sour-plum drink and 'sugar cane and cogon grass root' drink.

Besides, since hotpot soup bases, offal and shellfishes (e.g. scallops, oysters and mussels) are relatively high in purines content, people with gout should pay special attention and limit their intake of these food items to prevent their conditions from worsening.