

You are what you eat!

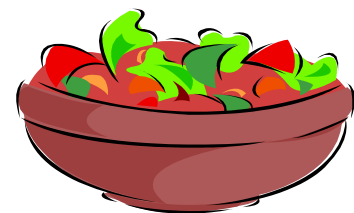
Making Your Diet a Priority

Spring is one of the easiest times of year to tackle a diet.

When I say diet, I don't mean those fancy, meal in a box or shake. I also don't mean a list of restrictions and never haves and all those rules. This is about making the food you chose become the healthiest it can be. So let's take on the junk food and make it wholesome!

1. Keep a food diary. You won't know what needs to be improved until you know where you stand. Record everything you consume, to include drinks.
2. Eat breakfast! This boosts your metabolism and mental focus, and studies show that breakfast eaters consume fewer calories over the course of a day than those who skip it!
3. Enjoy 2-3 servings of fresh fruits and vegetables. One of the best things about summer and spring is farmers markets and gardens. Try some new fruits or old favorites in new ways.
4. Drink more water. It really is the only beverage your body craves. Gradually replace empty calories such as soda, sweetened fruit drinks, caffeine etc. Aim for 8-12 cups a day.
5. Get to know your time saving appliances such as the microwave and the crock pot. Put together quick meal ingredients for those days when you don't feel like cooking or don't have the time. For example, a steamer bag of brown rice, lean chicken breast tenderloins, steamer bag of mixed vegetables. Then on a hectic night, steam the rice and vegetables and stir fry the meat in a small amount of oil. Toss together and enjoy!
6. Aim for 3-6 servings of grains each day. Half or more of those should be whole grain. Think outside the box. Try new grains such as quinoa. Whole grains keep you full longer, stabilize blood sugars and help lower unhealthy cholesterol levels.
7. Protect your bones with Calcium. Aim for 3 servings of calcium rich foods daily. Can't tolerate or consume dairy? There are many calcium fortified non-dairy options out there, to include almond milk, soy milk and even rice milk.
8. Modify your recipes. Keep your traditions intact but reduce the fat and calories and salt. Using whole grains where possible, reducing the amount of sugar, using ingredients like apple sauce or pumpkin puree to replace oil.
9. Eat regularly and don't skip meals. Your body maintains a steady blood sugar when you eat regularly. Sudden drops in blood sugar make a person hungry and if you eat until you feel better, oftentimes you will eat 300 more calories than you need.
10. Read labels and be more aware of the nutrition information for your favorites. Look at your pantry and identify the family favorites. When it is time to replace these items, do a comparison at the store. Try to find it with less salt, saturated fat and calories.
11. How much salt do you really need? If you have heart disease, diabetes or other chronic health conditions, aim for less than 1500mg of sodium a day. Our palates have become accustomed to high sodium levels. The easiest way to retrain your palate is to wean off. Replace foods with lower sodium amounts as they run out. Choose freezer meals with lower salt. Start becoming aware of the sources of salt in your diet and get from there. Most of the salt in our diets come from a box, can or bag, not a shaker!
12. Shop seasonally and enjoy the freshest picks. Spring brings abundance of asparagus, bananas, beets, berries, figs, green beans, mangos, peas, peppers and pineapple.
13. Finally, reduce portion sizes. One of the simplest methods of portion control is the plate method. Imagine your plate and divide it into half. Divide one side into halves again. Half the plate is filled with fruits and veggies. One third with protein and the other third with grains or starches such as potato or corn. Add a glass of milk on the side and you have a balanced meal.

Much of the disease and sickness that plague our modern society, has food at their root cause. Take control of your food, retrain your palate and get to know foods in their natural healthiest form. By keeping the sodium and preservatives out, you control what you are consuming. Reduce your risks for diabetes, heart disease and even some cancers by making your diet as healthy as it can be!



Keeping You Healthy is our Number One Priority!



Special points of interest:

• Don't forget your Flu Vaccine!

- Wash your hands often.
- Choose your health goals wisely. Think long term benefits.
- List the habits that you will need to change to succeed at your goals.
- Give us a call so we can give you support, encouragement, resources and tools to make your goals a new way of living!

