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The facts about diet

Fact 1: chronic inflammation is the driving factor for weight gain (especially around the middle) and many disease processes such as diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers.

Fact 2: An Anti-inflammatory Diet / Plant based diet can help prevent disease risk and unwanted weight gain. You don't have to become a vegetarian, but learn to eat more plant based meals and use "animal proteins" as a condiment.

Fact 3: Eat regular, healthy meals. Eat regularly, and make sure that every meal contains some protein, carbohydrate, and healthy fat. This will help to prevent blood sugar spikes and dips, and will lead to less fatigue, a better mood, and lessened risk of overeating at the next meal.

Tips for eating healthier:

- **Include whole-grains** - learn to differentiate between intact whole grains and "high extraction" grain products. "High-extraction" means that a large percent of the whole grain (usually about 40%) gets extracted prior to the making of flour. When this happens, the bran and the germ portions of the grain (which contain virtually all of the fiber, most of the minerals, and the majority of the vitamins) are milled out. From a nutritional standpoint, the result is a product that bears little resemblance to the grain from which it was made. Whole "intact" grains provide vitamin and minerals, may help control weight gain and prevent lifestyle related diseases and promote regularity. In addition, whole grains contain the phytoestrogen lignan, which may reduce the severity and frequency of hot flashes, help to reduce breast cancer risk, and help in the maintenance of bone density.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids** - protect against inflammation, heart disease, bone loss, and mood disorders. Omega-3-fatty acids are found in many foods such as walnuts, salmon, mackerel, lake trout, anchovies, tuna, wheat germ, soy beans, walnut/canola oils
- **Probiotics and prebiotics** - contain healthy bacteria that can help synthesize B vitamins, lower cholesterol levels, enhance calcium absorption, promote regularity, aid in the building of a healthy immune

system and decrease cancer risk. Dietary sources include miso, kefir, yogurt, kim chee.

- **Vitamin D and calcium**

Make sure to get enough calcium and vitamin D to prevent bone loss, maintain cardiac health, and discourage insomnia. In addition, vitamin D is important for mood stabilization and a healthy immune system. Vitamin D containing foods include fortified milk and cereal products, egg yolks, liver and fatty fish. Calcium is found in dairy products, dark leafy greens, almonds and sesame seeds.

- **Magnesium** - helps in the retention of bone mass and a healthy cardiovascular system. Some studies have shown that it also may prevent hot flashes, mood problems, and insomnia. Dietary sources include nuts, legumes, tofu, whole grains, dark green vegetables, seafood, and chocolate.

The facts about weight

Fact 1: Some people think weight gain is inevitable, but it really is not. The main reasons for adult weight gain include: overeating, lack of physical activity, stress, and hormones.

Fact 2: You will gain weight if you do not decrease the amount of food that you eat or increase the amount of physical activity that you do as you age. Metabolism slows down by about 10% during every decade after your teens. The average person gains 10-15 pounds between the ages of 30 and 40 due to overeating. A waist measurement of 35" or more for a woman and 40" or more for a man increase risk for developing cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Fact 3: Activity matters! As we age, we tend to lose ½ lb of muscle mass, and gain ½ lb of fat each year. This is why it is so important to include strength training (two to three times/week) and aerobic exercise at least 5 days/week. This will help to keep the weight off by burning calories and decreasing your appetite.

Tips for preventing unwanted weight gain:

- Learn proper portion sizes. We are surrounded by enormous portions, and many of us have lost the ability to determine what a normal portion size looks like.

- As a general rule, have a serving of complex carbs (palm-size), protein (fist-size), and healthy fat (around a tablespoon), and fill the rest of your plate with any non-starchy veggies such as broccoli, cauliflower, or green beans.
- Do not bring junk into your house. The best way to prevent eating junk food is to not have it available. If you must have junk food, buy yourself an individual serving bag. Stop thinking of warehouse sizes as money-saving options.
- Prepare for the munchies. You are going to get hungry, and your best plan of action is to keep your house, office, car, or briefcase stocked with healthful options. A handful of nuts, or piece of fruit can take the edge off and are easy to pack in your purse. Do not tell yourself that you are just “never going to eat between meals,” because you are setting yourself up to fail.
- Practice relaxation, and read up on stress management. It will do your body, your mind, and your spirit good.
- Eat, already. Don’t let your children eat better than you by forgetting to fuel yourself. Aim to eat every three hours. Otherwise, you're likely to become famished and binge on unhealthy foods.
- Eat your own food! Don’t graze off your kids' plates and remember to stock up on healthy foods with low prep time, like canned tuna and frozen veggies.
- Keep your carbohydrate intake consistent.

A word about Carbohydrates

Fact 1: Carbohydrates are our bodies preferred source of fuel. They come from diverse sources such as sugar, candy, sweetened beverages, and processed snack foods such as chips and cookies, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. The difference between them is that some of them make us fat, while others are true fat burners!

Fact 2: Carbohydrates that enter the bloodstream rapidly have the potential to make you store fat. Conversely, those carbohydrates that enter the bloodstream slowly and steadily can help stabilize blood sugar levels and operate as fat burners.

Fact 3: Whenever you eat, you trigger a cascade of hormones that control energy metabolism.

Tips for balancing hormones:

- **Insulin** is a “fat storing” hormone that is triggered when you consume processed carbohydrates. The sugar molecules present in processed foods have the ability to pass quickly from the intestines to the bloodstream, and the pancreas responds by delivering a **LARGE AMOUNT** of insulin to halt the sugar barrage.
- **Insulin** will either divert sugar from the bloodstream to the muscles or convert it to fat. As a result blood sugar levels drop rapidly and the brain’s sugar supply is depleted. This results with the brain responding with a ravenous craving for something sweet, and this cycle is repeated every time we fuel our body improperly.
- **Glucagon**, the fat burning hormone, sends signals to transport fat to the mitochondria (tiny little kilns within the cells that combust fat into heat) to be used for energy. Unfortunately, when insulin **dominates** the blood, glucagon can not work effectively.
- **What not to do:** eat a high fat, high “simple” carbohydrate meal (think spaghetti and meat balls made with beef) which will increase the insulin in your blood, which will in turn immediately transport the fat molecules in the meatballs to the fat storage cells on your hips!
- **What to do:** Create a fat burning combo by combining (no more than a cup) of whole grain pasta with lots of non starchy vegetables and a smaller portion of *lean* turkey or buffalo meatballs to keep the insulin at bay; this allows the fat from the meat to be burned off in the muscle cells.



Polenta, Onion and Gorgonzola Pizza

(Using polenta is a wonderful way to have a healthy, gluten free pizza crust and the toppings are only limited by your imagination)

Ingredients:

- ¾ cup polenta
- 2 ½ cups water
- 1 T. chicken or vegetable broth
- 3 medium onions, cut in half and sliced thin
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 T. chopped fresh thyme
- 4 oz. gorgonzola (or bleu) cheese
- Salt & pepper to taste

Directions:

Bring lightly salted water to a boil in a medium pot. Slice onions and let them sit for at 10 minutes.

When water comes to a boil, add polenta slowly while stirring, and reduce heat to low. Continue stirring polenta and cook for about 10 minutes until it thickens. Wooden spoon should almost stand up in polenta. Spread evenly in shallow 8 "x 8" cake pan, or 9" tart pan. Let sit to firm up.

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Heat oil in a medium skillet. Sauté onions over medium heat for approximately 10 minutes. Add garlic and continue to sauté for another minute. Add fresh thyme and sea salt and pepper to taste. Spread onions evenly over polenta and top with crumpled cheese.

Place in oven until cheese melts, about 10 minutes.

Serves 4-6



Green Beans w/Eggs, Chiles & Cilantro

Ingredients:

- 1 lb green beans cut into 2" pieces
- 1 T. unsalted butter
- 1 T. vegetable oil
- One small onion, finely chopped
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten plus 4 egg whites
- Salt & freshly ground pepper
- 1 cup chopped cilantro, plus small sprigs for garnish
- 2 T. chopped walnuts
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 small jalapeno, seeded and minced
- 1 small red chile, seeded and minced
- ½ t. dill seeds

Directions:

In a large saucepan of boiling salted water, cook the green beans until tender, 6 minutes. Drain and let cool. Transfer to a bowl.

In a large nonstick skillet, melt the butter in the oil. Add the onion and cook over moderate heat, stirring, until softened, about 6 minutes. Add the eggs and season with salt and pepper. Cook over moderate heat, stirring, until the eggs are scrambled, about 3 minutes. Add the eggs to the beans.

Stir in the chopped cilantro, walnuts, garlic, jalapeno, red chile and dill seeds. Season with salt and pepper.

Garnish with cilantro sprigs just before serving.



Fall Salad of Corn, Cherry Tomatoes, and Oven-Roasted Green Onions

Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh tarragon
- 1 1/2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 1/2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 cup olive oil
- 6 tablespoons sour cream
- 18 green onions
- 6 cups fresh corn kernels
- 3 cups halved cherry tomatoes

Directions:

Combine first 4 ingredients in processor. With machine running, gradually add 3/4 cup oil. Transfer mixture to medium bowl. Whisk in sour cream. Season dressing to taste with salt and pepper.

Preheat oven to 450°F. Place onions on rimmed baking sheet. Brush with remaining 1/4 cup oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast until beginning to brown, about 10 minutes. Cool. Cut into 1-inch pieces. Transfer to large bowl.

Cook corn in large pot of boiling salted water until crisp-tender, about 4 minutes. Drain; add to onions. (Dressing and onion-corn mixture can be made 1 day ahead. Cover separately; chill.) Add tomatoes and dressing to onion-corn mixture and toss. Serve warm or at room temperature.