

## Give Your Diet a Nutritional Tune-Up

Healthy Weight Week is January 17-23, 2010



**B**etween spending long days at work and evenings and weekends attending to personal and family concerns, few Americans have time to eat right. But you don't have to remodel your diet to improve its healthfulness.

"There are easy and delicious ways to regularly add healthful foods to your diet," says Evelyn Tribole, M.S., R.D., dietitian and author of several nutrition books, including *Intuitive Eating*.

Ms. Tribole suggests the following tips for tuning up your diet:

### Fruits and Vegetables

Eating five to thirteen servings (or 2½ to 6½ cups) of fruits and vegetables each day can help you prevent cancer, heart disease, and other health problems.

To sneak more fruits and vegetables into your diet:

- Add finely grated carrots to spaghetti sauce. Carrots are loaded with beta carotene, an antioxidant. You can also add kale or spinach to the sauce.
- Fortify your salad. "A salad is a great place to add other vegetables," says Ms. Tribole. Top Boston lettuce with chopped bell peppers, onions, carrots, and tomatoes. Remember that what goes into a salad depends on your taste. Some suggestions are jalapeno peppers, baby green peas, cauliflower, thinly sliced purple cabbage, onion, cucumber, beans, sprouts (barley, bean, radish), mushrooms, Oriental vegetables, and other exotic vegetables. In addition, some fruits make great additions for a slightly sweeter flavor. Raspberries, blueberries, Mandarin oranges, mangoes, papayas, and kiwi make flavorful and nutritious additions. Remember to use a fat-free or low-fat dressing.

### Low-Fat Dairy Products

Low-fat dairy products are high in calcium, which helps prevent bone-weakening osteoporosis.

To sneak in at least three servings of calcium-rich foods a day:

- Switch to skinny lattes (2/3 skim milk to 1/3 strong coffee) instead of regular coffee.
- Drink calcium-fortified orange juice instead of the regular kind. You'll get as much calcium as if you drank a glass of milk.
- Cook oatmeal and other hot cereals with low-fat milk instead of water.
- Choose yogurt for a snack.

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**Iron**

Iron deficiency can be caused by too little iron in your diet. (Other reasons for iron deficiency are inadequate absorption of iron and excessive blood loss.) Because iron helps carry oxygen to the blood and deliver it to cells, you may feel sluggish and fatigued without enough of it. Women of childbearing age (especially those who have heavy menstrual periods), pregnant women, preterm and low-birth-weight infants, older infants and toddlers, and teenage girls are at greatest risk for developing iron deficiency anemia because they have the greatest need for iron. For these people, iron supplements may be necessary to prevent iron deficiency anemia.

To add more iron to your diet, include red meats, fish, and poultry. Plant foods such as lentils and beans and iron-enriched and iron-fortified foods are also common sources of dietary iron.

**Fiber**

A high-fiber diet reduces the risk of heart disease.

To sneak more fiber into your diet:

- Toss beans into salads and soups.
- Try hummus or black-bean or pinto-bean dip with crudité's and chips.
- Sprinkle wheat germ on yogurt or into a cobbler or a crust.
- Serve brown rice or wild rice instead of white rice.
- Buy bread and crackers with "whole wheat" listed as the first ingredient. "If the label just says 'wheat,' the product probably contains white flour, which is low in fiber," says Ms. Tribole.

For more information visit:

<http://www.healthyweightnetwork.com/>



**Workplace Goals for the New Year**

The new year brings hopes and dreams for the future. You've made your resolutions -- to lose weight, exercise, or plan a dream vacation, for example.

Don't forget, however, that you also spend one-third of your day at work. You can improve your on-the-job enjoyment and your productivity by making the following work resolutions:

**Learn New Skills**

To keep your career moving forward and prevent burnout, learn some new skills. Investigate which ones you'll need for a promotion or for your dream job, then make sure you acquire them. Make a resolution to always be learning something new.

**Keep Organized**

Most people don't function well in the midst of chaos. The clutter on your desk likely distracts you and muddles your thinking. If your office is disorganized, the time you spend getting organized will be paid back in less stress and increased productivity.

Make a resolution to spend the last 15 minutes of every day clearing your desk and getting organized for the next day.

**Take Daily Breaks**

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Human beings aren't built to sit at a desk for hours at a stretch -- that's why the coffee break was invented. But, there are better ways to use your breaks -- quick, simple techniques that rejuvenate the body, mind, and spirit so you can return to work refreshed and ready to accomplish great things.

The following energizing breaks take less than two minutes: Count down from 10 to one, taking a deep breath with each number. Read affirmations, inspiring quotes, or poetry. Read a couple of pages of a book. Put your hands over your eyes and visualize a favorite vacation spot. Gaze out a window. Listen to your favorite music. Stand up and stretch your muscles. Doodle. Drink a full glass of water. Eat a healthy snack. Take a short walk.

#### **Structure Your Time**

Are you wasting time taking care of things that just aren't important? If so, you'll be frustrated when you fritter away your workdays doing things your boss would consider insignificant.

The solution is to block off one or two hours of quiet time each day that you spend focusing on your important tasks. Since most people concentrate best in the morning, choose your quiet time early in the day. Then transfer your calls to your voice mail and put a "Do Not Disturb" sign on your door.

Make a resolution to set aside quiet time every day to work on your important projects.

#### **Keep an Accomplishment Journal**

Buy a separate notebook for an Accomplishment Journal. At the end of the day, write the date on a new page and write something that you accomplished. It doesn't have to be something major. Even little steps of progress need to be acknowledged.

For example: "I dealt with Mr. Jones, a difficult customer, in a very kind and professional way," or "I wrote two pages of a special report."

Writing such a journal increases your enthusiasm as you look for things to accomplish and write in your journal. Your focus will be on what you did instead

of what you didn't do. Keeping the journal will also give you more confidence during employee reviews or when asking for a promotion.

One last thought: When you follow through on your work resolutions and make them daily habits, you'll experience increased productivity, more energy and enthusiasm, and the joy of accomplishment.



### **Older Moms, Healthy Babies** **January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month**

If you are over age 35 and planning to have your first baby, you may have concerns about becoming pregnant later in life. You may have heard that a woman's risk for complications during pregnancy goes up after age 35. The fact is that most women in their 30s and 40s have healthy pregnancies and healthy babies. To ensure a healthy pregnancy, you should do what any woman should do: Prepare for your baby with healthy lifestyle choices. Talk with your doctor about your risk factors and learn what you can do to prevent potential problems.

#### **Baby Your Body**

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The best thing you can do for your baby is to be in good health before you become pregnant. Eat a balanced, nutritious diet, lose weight if you are overweight, and take a prenatal vitamin that has at least 400 micrograms of folic acid.

You should have a full medical exam before you become pregnant. Tell your doctor that you are planning to become pregnant and ask about potential health risks. For example, if you have high blood pressure or diabetes, it could affect your pregnancy. Also, after age 35 you are more likely to develop high blood pressure or diabetes during pregnancy.

If you have a chronic condition or other health problem, work with your doctor to get it under control before you conceive. You should also stop any unhealthy habits, such as smoking, drinking, or using drugs before you become pregnant. A healthy mother is more likely to have a healthy baby.

After age 30, women experience some decrease in fertility, but it's unlikely to prevent you from becoming pregnant. It may just take longer to conceive. However, if you do not successfully become pregnant after six months, you may want to talk with your doctor.

### **Congratulations, You're Pregnant**

Once you conceive, it's important to start prenatal care early. This allows your doctor to monitor your pregnancy. It also helps ensure that any potential problems are caught and treated early.

After age 35, a woman's risk of having a baby with a birth defect increases. For example, a 25-year-old woman has a 1 in 1,250 chance of having a baby with Down syndrome. At age 35, the risk increases to 1 in 378. In spite of this increase, the risk is still small. To avoid any problems, your doctor will assess your potential risk based on your personal and family medical history. Certain tests before or during pregnancy may include an alpha-fetoprotein test, an ultrasound, and possibly chromosome and/or genetic studies. Discuss the pros and cons of these tests with your doctor.

Having a baby at any age is both exciting and a little scary. Once you have decided to take the big step into parenthood, try to relax and enjoy your pregnancy. Remember that most older mothers have no more problems during pregnancy than younger women do. You'll feel more confident knowing that you're doing all you can to have a healthy baby.