meijer healthy living

Monthly Strategy for January 2007

Weight Loss Tips from the Experts

1. **Make small realistic changes.** Small changes can add up to big losses. You may start by increasing the steps you take each day (2,000 steps burns approximately 100 calories). Or find ways to easily decrease calorie intake – eat small portions; use low-fat salad dressing; switch to fat-free milk; use Equal Sweetener in your hot beverages; etc.

2. **Eat breakfast.** Studies show that individuals who eat breakfast tend to weigh less than non-breakfast eaters. You'll also have more energy for play and be able to concentrate better at work.

3. **Choose whole grains.** Whole grain foods add fiber and valuable nutrients to your diet and there are many new whole grain products in the store to try. Experiment with whole grain pasta and rice mixes, couscous, breads, cereals and crackers.

4. **Eat more fruits and vegetables.** Colorful fruits and vegetables are low calorie foods that are full of nutrients that fight many diseases. Stock your refrigerator with cut up veggies and place a fruit bowl on your kitchen counter for easy access.

5. **Choose lower fat meals.** Look for low-fat versions of your favorite foods and decrease the amount of fat you add to foods.

6. **Plan to be active.** Schedule planned activities during the week but also look for ways to move more in your daily routine. Take the stairs more often, walk the dog, run the vacuum, or deliver an office message in person instead of e-mailing.

7. **Monitor yourself frequently.** Know your weight and check it weekly. Monitor your steps by wearing a pedometer. (Try to work up to 10,000 steps a day and remember to check with your physician before starting any new exercise program). Keep a food record to ensure a balanced diet.

8. **Get your family involved.** Healthy eating and fitness is a family matter! Plan family celebrations around fun activities instead of high calorie meals.

Get the kids involved in meal prep and clean up and enjoy several weekly meals together.

Meal Strategies

Quick Breakfast Ideas

- Meijer Whole Grain English muffin with peanut butter; grapefruit half; Meijer fat-free milk
- Baggie of trail mix (Kellogg's whole grain cereal, raisins, Planters Nuts); 100% juice box
- Meijer Whole grain frozen waffles with banana slices and Meijer lite syrup
- Yoplait vanilla yogurt topped with Kellogg's Low Fat Granola and sliced strawberries

Lunch Menus to Go

- Oscar Mayer South Beach Chicken Wrap; Fruit 2 0; Apple; Baby Carrots
- Chicken salad on wheat bread (Valley Fresh Chunk Chicken and low fat mayonnaise) with tomato slices; Del Monte Lite Pear Slices; Entenmann's 100 Calorie Little Bites
- Progresso Vegetable Soup; whole grain crackers; 2% cheese slices; lite peach halves
- StarKist Tuna salad on greens; light vinaigrette; Nature Valley Granola Bar; Diet Snapple

Easy Dinner Ideas

- Garlic Chicken Pasta Bowl (recipe below); Tossed Green Salad; Frozen Yogurt
- Broiled Lemon Pepper Tilapia; Meijer Instant Brown Rice (cooked in chicken broth; Broccoli Florets; Meijer Fat-Free Milk
- Use the Meijer Weekly Menu Planner at www.meijer.com/healthyliving for new quick and healthy meal ideas that are based on Meijer sale items

Nutrient Focus
January is Folic Acid Awareness Month

Folic acid is a B-vitamin that is necessary for proper cell growth. If taken before and during early pregnancy from a multi-vitamin or fortified foods, folic acid can prevent from 50% up to 70% of some forms of birth defects called neural tube defects.

Neural tube defects (NTDs) include spina bifida and anencephaly. NTDs affect an estimated 4,000 pregnancies each year. Spina bifida, the most common NTD, is the leading cause of childhood paralysis. Anencephaly, another type of NTD that affects the brain, is always fatal.

In 1992, the United States Public Health Service recommended that all women of childbearing years should take 400 micrograms (0.4 mg) of folic acid daily to prevent having a pregnancy affected by a neural tube defect.

Though it is possible to obtain the recommended dosage of folic acid through foods, it is difficult. The human body actually absorbs the synthetic form of folic acid better than the natural form of folic acid called “folate.” In 1998, the Food and Drug Administration required the addition of folic acid to enriched breads, cereals, flours, pastas, rice and other grain products in order to increase the amount of synthetic folic acid in the general population’s diet.

Most experts recommend that women of childbearing years should take 400 micrograms of synthetic folic acid daily, from fortified foods and/or a daily multi-vitamin, and eat a variety of foods as part of a healthy diet. The easiest way to be sure to get the recommended daily amount of folic acid is to take a multi-vitamin every day.

New research suggests that folic acid can also help prevent other birth defects, such as cleft lip and cleft palate. Additional health benefits associated with folic acid include reductions in cardiovascular disease and colon, cervical and breast cancers. Studies have shown that folic acid, in combination with vitamins B12 and B6, can help prevent recurrence of blocked arteries in patients who have undergone angioplasty (a procedure to unblock an artery of the heart). Folic acid may also help prevent Alzheimer’s disease by protecting the neurons critical for learning and memory. Emerging research suggests that folic acid deficiency can also increase the brain’s susceptibility to Parkinson’s disease.

Folic Acid in Foods

Foods are fortified when they have extra folic acid added. Check labels for the amounts. Some fortified foods include:

- Breads, breakfast cereals (like Kellogg’s), crackers, macaroni, rice, spaghetti

Other foods that are high in natural folate include:

- Black beans Orange Juice Spinach
- Blackeye peas Peanuts (like Planters) Split peas
- Broccoli Pinto beans Sunflower Seeds
- Mustard greens Refried beans Turnip greens

You can also ensure that you get your daily folic acid by taking a Meijer multivitamin every day. It should list 400 mcg (or 0.4 mg) of folic acid or folate on the label.

Sources: www.folicacidinfo.org, and the Michigan Department of Community Health Birth Defects Program

Please consult your physician or healthcare provider with any health-related concerns, including changing your diet or starting an exercise routine. Information found at Meijer.com should never replace your doctor's advice or care.

©Copyright 1996-2006 Meijer Great Lakes Limited Partnership All Rights Reserved.