



Winter Newsletter 2011

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The truth about sodium

Most Canadians get too much sodium in their diet and too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure which is linked to stroke, heart disease and kidney disease.

Many foods have sodium however about half of the sodium we eat comes from processed, preserved and prepared foods. The other half is added during cooking or at the dinner table. There is sodium that is naturally found in some foods, water and medication however these are in small amounts and do not comprise the majority of our diet.

Tips for using less salt

- Try to follow Canada's Food Guide which promotes foods that are less processed and naturally low in sodium i.e. vegetables, fruit, milk, whole grains
- Cook more meals at home and try to make your own soups, sauces and dressings
- Use fresh, frozen or low sodium canned vegetables
- Use spices and herbs to flavour your food instead of salt
- Try healthy snacks like veggies, fruit, yogurt, unsalted nuts, and popcorn
- Limit salty condiments like sauces i.e. soy sauce, teriyaki, BBQ sauce, ketchup, mustard, relish and pickles
- Buy low sodium or no salt added products and rinse canned foods before using
- Buy less processed foods – use block cheese instead of processed cheese and sliced roast meat instead of salami or bologna
- Remove the salt shaker from the table
- Learn how to read nutrition labels – a healthy adult needs 1200-1500 mg of sodium daily (about ½ tsp) and not more than 2200 mg of sodium per day (about 1 tsp)
 - *Lightly salted or less salt* means this product has 25% less salt than the regular product or 100 mg less sodium
 - *Low salt/sodium* means this product has less than 50% of the sodium found in the regular product or less than 40 mg of sodium per 100g of food

Adapted from Nutrition Matters/www.toronto.ca/health/nutrition/index.htm

Bring out the old Exercise Ball!

Many of us have an exercise ball hiding in our basements so I thought I would share this website with pictures and instructions which demonstrates some basic exercises for balance, stability and strength using the ball. If you are new to the exercise ball you may need to sit next to a wall or hold onto a chair for balance.

It is recommended that you begin with one set of each exercise and as you get stronger, you can add more! Remember to check with your doctor if you have any injuries or medical conditions prior to starting a new workout routine. It's January, what better way to start the year and get moving!

Check it out at: <http://exercise.about.com/library/blbeginnerball.htm>. I have also attached this document for your reference if you would prefer to print it off from this email.



Meet Sara! Registered Dietician

Sara Berdugo is very excited to be working at Balance for Life. Sara is a Registered Dietitian, registered with the College of Dietitians of Ontario and a member of Dietitians of Canada. Sara has an extensive educational background in nutrition including an Honours Bachelor of Science degree in Physiology and Nutritional Sciences from University of Toronto, a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Nutrition and Food from Ryerson University, and a Master of Applied Nutrition degree from the University of Guelph. While completing her Masters degree, Sara also completed her dietetic internship at St. Joseph's Healthcare, Hamilton as well as at various Family Health Teams and Long-Term Care centres in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. When she is not working at Balance for Life, Sara works at Vaughan Community Health Centre where she provides individual nutritional counselling as well as facilitates group programs on various topics related to nutrition. Sara is also a Consulting Dietitian for Leisureworld Caregiving Centres. Sara's practice philosophy emphasizes a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle that still allows you to enjoy the foods that you love. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, snowboarding, cooking, and being active. Sara is available for nutritional counselling by appointment on the first Friday of every month.

The Story about Sugar

As a kid, you probably craved the sweetness of cookies, candies, cakes, and soft drinks. Some of you may have outgrown this craving, while some of you may continue to have them. In general, sugars provide extra calories that your body does not need. Sugary foods are usually low in essential nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, and fibre. These sugary foods may take the place of healthier foods in your diet. Newer research has also shown a connection between a high sugar intake and risk of obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. You should be especially careful about limiting sugary drinks such as soft drinks, sports drinks, sugary specialty coffee and tea drinks, and juices because they have a lot of calories from sugar. Since sugary drinks are in liquid form, they do not fill you up at all. When you eat or drink a food with a lot of sugar, you may feel an instant energy boost as the sugar quickly enters your blood, but that boost is usually followed by a fast crash, where your blood sugar drops to a level lower than before you ate. When your blood sugar drops, your energy level drops and you end up feeling hungrier. On the other hand, if you eat a balanced diet that includes vegetables and fruit, lean protein meat and alternatives, low fat dairy, and whole grains, your energy and hunger levels will be more balanced throughout the day. These healthier foods are digested more slowly than high sugar foods.

When you go to the grocery store, you may find yourself overwhelmed by all of the different types of sugar available, or all of the different names for sugar in the ingredients lists of packaged foods. Sugars are naturally found in fruit and milk. These sugars are okay in your diet because the fruit also provides essential vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fibre and milk provides protein and essential vitamins and minerals. The most common form of added sugar is white sugar, or table sugar, which usually comes from refined sugar cane or sugar beets. However, all simple or concentrated sugars, whether from a more "natural" or refined source, will all provide empty calories and contribute to the pattern of energy boost and crash. In the end, all sugar is sugar, whether it is white sugar, brown sugar, raw sugar, evaporated cane juice, maple syrup, corn syrup, honey, agave nectar, or others. Sugar is also often disguised in ingredients lists using names ending in "-ose" just as sucrose, dextrose or glucose-fructose, and different names for sugar may appear multiple times in the ingredients list. Contrary to popular belief, brown sugar is no less processed than white sugar, and although honey and maple syrup are natural sugars, they will still have the same effect on the body as the more processed sugars.

Since many of us do get pleasure from sweet foods, the goal should be a balanced diet that may include occasional treats in small portions. "Nutrition Action" magazine recommends no more than 6 ½ teaspoons (or 25 grams) of added sugars per day for women and 9 ½ teaspoons (or 38 grams) added sugars per day. This number includes the sugar that is already present in packaged foods as well as sugar that you add to foods at home. You can check the nutritional information on food packages for this information. Keep in mind that packaged foods that contain milk or fruit will have some naturally occurring sugars, which you do not need to worry about. If you are worried about your weight or risk of diseases such as diabetes and heart disease, lowering your sugar intake is one way of improving your diet, but eating less sugar on its own will not completely make up for a diet that is high in fat, sodium (salt), or low in fibre.