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*Prescribing Health
and Wellness
Naturally*

Happy New Year

As the New Year rolls around, people often take stock of their current situation and consider their future. Resolutions are bandied about with all kinds of personal promises, big and small. A common one is the gym commitment with attendance increasing in early January. Unfortunately, by the end of January, the gym crowds have thinned.

What can we do to increase the likelihood of sticking to our pledges?

Studies indicate when people feel good they tend to continue to incorporate the changes that led to the positive experience. Conversely, when we feel we are missing out,

we are likely to rebel and cast off the changes that produced the feelings of deprivation.

Recently I attended the American Society of Nutrition's (ASN) annual conference where for 3 days I was privy to the latest evidence-based research in the field of the nutritional sciences. This newsletter highlights some of the practical information presented at the conference.

Perhaps the information will encourage you to make several positive (and doable) changes to improve your overall health and reduce your risk of illness without over committing or feeling deprived.

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Forgo the Resolutions and Make a Practical Plan

New Year's Resolutions: those too often short-lived disappointments. This New Year take the opportunity to contemplate what you want to achieve in 2014 and set *attainable* goals. First, evaluate where you are now and what areas of your life

you want to address. Do you want to eat a healthier diet? Exercise more? Learn a new language? Adopt a pet? Make a plan and create a map with small doable steps to get to your destination. People tend to become frustrated and give up when they set unrealistic

expectations. Positive reinforcement comes from successfully completing each step. Overtime you may be surprised to see how far you have come.

Breakfast: The Most Important Meal of the Day?

According to data presented at the ASN 2013 meeting, 93% of people believe breakfast is the most important meal of the day; however, only 43% of adults actually eat breakfast. In truth, data to support breakfast as the most important meal of the day are limited. We do know breakfast was a staple of the American diet 50 years ago. Its gradual decline in consumption has mirrored the increase in obesity in this country. A 5-year study of 2000 young people found an increase in body mass index associated with a decrease in breakfast consumption. Breakfast may or may not be *the* most important meal of the day, but it should be eaten every day. A healthy

breakfast provides energy for the body and mind for optimal functioning throughout the morning. A healthy breakfast is one that is well-balanced with whole food sources of protein, carbohydrate, and fat. Consider:

Plain, non- or low-fat Greek yogurt. Add fresh fruit and nuts;

Banana with peanut butter

Vegetable omelet

Fruit and vegetable smoothie

Oatmeal with raisins, apples, nuts, and milk

The Power of Protein

Although most Americans enjoy more than adequate amounts of protein in their diet, the timing and quality of the protein may not be ideal. Typically, little protein is eaten in the morning while most is consumed at dinner.

Uniform distribution of approximately 25 to 30gm of protein at each meal lowers hunger and maintains lean body mass.

Excellent sources of protein include fish, Greek yogurt, lentils, beans, eggs, lean, non-processed meat, milk, and nuts (particularly almonds, cashews, pistachios, and peanuts).

Of note, vegetarians and those on a low-calorie diet must be particularly vigilant to ensure they consume 10% to 25% of their calories from protein.

	Protein (grams)
Greek yogurt (7oz)	20
Beans (1/2 cup)	7
Lentils (1/2 cup)	9
Meat, fish (3 oz)	21
Milk (8 oz)	8
Egg	6
Almonds (1/4 cup)	6

Are all Saturated Fats the Same?

We used to think so, but recent information has come to light to question that assumption. Data show an increase in red meat consumption increases all-cause mortality, mainly from cardiovascular disease. On the other hand, the saturated fat (SF) from dairy is not associated with an increase in mortality and some studies report a 25% decrease in cardiovascular disease risk when meat SF is replaced by dairy SF. What to make of these findings?

Identification of trimethylamine N-oxide (TMAO) may answer that question. TMAO, which promotes arterial plaque formation, is produced when L-carnitine in meat interacts with microbes in the gut flora. The amount of L-carnitine in cheese and milk is dramatically lower than in meat and may explain the increased risk of cardiovascular disease associated with meat compared with dairy. In essence, the equation of cholesterol and SF leading to heart disease is

not so simple. While it is clear that trans fats are a health risk and polyunsaturated fats offer protection, the jury is still out on SFs. The American Heart Association recommends consuming less than 7% of calories from SF. A 2000 calorie diet allows for 140 calories or 15 grams/day of SF. For reference: 1 tablespoon butter = 7gm SF. My recommendation: consume most to all of those SF grams from dairy products, not red meat.

Are you Getting Enough Potassium?

Only 3% of Americans are meeting the recommended daily intake of 4700mg. The typical American diet does not supply a generous amount of potassium; however, potassium is an important mineral to consume as it is involved in numerous physiologic processes, including electrical activity in the heart, muscle maintenance, and acid-base balance. Adequate potassium may lower blood pressure, prevent cardiovascular

disease, prevent kidney damage, and decrease bone resorption.

You should never take a potassium supplement unless instructed and supervised by your doctor.

Instead, a diet rich in potassium-containing foods is advised.

Where to find potassium?

The old spud is a great source. One baked potato with skin provides 610mg. Other potassium-rich foods include: white beans (1000mg/

cup), yogurt (579mg/cup), tomato puree (549/half cup), banana (422mg), and spinach (419mg/half cup cooked).

Make it a point to include a potassium-rich food at each meal with the goal of consuming 4700mg/day. For a general list of high/low potassium-containing foods, please visit:

www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/transplant/posttransplant/post_potass_eng.pdf

Don't Disregard Dairy

Did you know, individuals with self-reported lactose intolerance have a 40% increased risk of hypertension and a 30% increased risk for developing diabetes.

For whatever reason, dairy has been the target of some bad press over the last decade; yet, for those who are not lactose intolerant or sensitive to dairy, dairy can be part of a healthy diet. The calcium and potassium in yogurt, cheese, and milk provide protection against

Dairy calcium reduces risk of colon cancer 42%



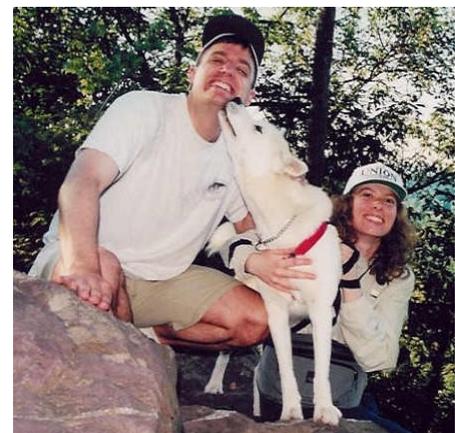
coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, osteoporosis, and even colorectal cancer.

When low-fat dairy is included as part of a healthy diet, all-cause mortality decreases 25% - 30%. Yogurt (not the frozen, high-sugar with sprinkles on top variety), offers the greatest health benefits, particularly Greek yogurt (high in protein and probiotics). Enjoy a serving plain or with some fresh fruit and/or granola mixed in.

Need Motivation to Exercise? Consider Dog Adoption

Although not for everyone, the health benefits derived from adopting a pet are numerous. Pet ownership is associated with decreased stress levels, lower blood pressure readings, and increased happiness. None of this is surprising considering pets give unconditional love and companionship. Dogs provide the extra benefit of requiring exercise. Not in the mood to go for a walk? That is not an option. Just as

humans need to move their bodies, dogs must exercise too. Dogs make great companions for outdoor activities – always happy to join in the fun of a walk, run, or game of 'catch.' If you are thinking of pet ownership, consider your local animal shelter. There are thousands of wonderful dogs and cats available for adoption. Not only will you give yourself the gift of health, you will be saving a life. And nothing feels better than that.



Hiking with our 3-year-old husky, Alpine soon after we adopted her. Rain or shine and especially in the snow, she got us moving outside!

Seasonal Eating: Winter Foods

- Cranberries
- Citrus fruits
- Pomegranates
- Persimmons
- Legumes
- Turkey
- Potatoes
- Brussels sprouts
- Leeks
- Beets
- Winter Squash
- Cabbage
- Kale

Featured Recipe

Tomato and Lentil Soup

2 tablespoons extravirgin olive oil
1½ cups finely chopped onion
½ cup finely chopped carrot
½ cup finely chopped celery
2 garlic cloves, minced
5½ cups water
1½ cups dried lentils
2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill, divided
2 bay leaves
1 dried red chile pepper
1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
¾ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¾ cup (3 ounces) crumbled feta cheese

1. Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion, carrot, celery, and garlic; cook 10 minutes or until the vegetables are tender, stirring frequently. Add water, dried lentils, 1 tablespoon dill, bay leaves, chile, and tomato sauce. Bring to a boil; reduce heat, and simmer 30 minutes or until lentils are tender. Stir in remaining 1 tablespoon dill, vinegar, salt, and black pepper; discard bay leaves and chile. Sprinkle with cheese. Yield: 6 servings (serving size: about 1 cup soup and 2 tablespoons cheese).

CALORIES 276 (27% from fat); FAT 8.2g (sat 2.8g, mono 4.1g, poly 0.8g); PROTEIN 16.7g; CARB 36.4g; FIBER 16.4g; CHOL 13mg; IRON 5mg; SODIUM 700mg; CALC 118mg

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