



As the short winter days recede and we enter the season of sunshine and April showers it is time to refresh your daily diet to give you more

energy and to lose those few unwanted pounds. Below are some recipes to help you as well as a summary of the research shown in the recent BBC Horizon program called 'The Truth about Fat'. This was incredibly interesting as science indicates that some of us do not have the correct levels of hormones that make you hungry and keep you feeling full so it is even more important to keep your food intake to be low glycaemic and so fat burning.

Easter Eats

Spicy Turkey Meatballs

Ingredients:

- 500g Mince Turkey (free range and organic, available from Waitrose)
- 1 onion (finely chopped)
- 3 slices of stale bread (wholemeal) made into crumbs
- 1 small tin of sweetcorn in water
- 1 free range egg
- 2 tbsp finely chopped parsley or leafy coriander
- 2 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper

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How will these foods help you?

Eating healthily during your pregnancy decreases the genetic predisposition toward obesity of your child in later life. So to nourish the next generation you need to eat food such as:

Butternut

Squash contains vitamin B6. This is essential for brain function, hormone production and especially helps to balance sex hormones. It helps to limit the build up of homocysteine which when high causes inflammation and can negatively affect the pregnancy and the unborn fetus. Butternut squash is also full of natural immune boosting nutrients that helps to control allergic reactions.

Turkey contains vitamin B12. This is needed for the synthesis of DNA. (It's all in the genes!) It helps make protein which builds hormones and new cells. It is also essential for energy and detoxification. Turkey

1 tsp ground coriander

1 garlic clove

Method

1. Mix in the mince and chopped onion in a large bowl
2. Mix in the bread crumbs, spices, chopped parsley and crushed garlic clove. Knead together with your hands
3. Add the drained sweetcorn
4. Bind together with the beaten egg
5. In a deep frying pan heat up some olive oil and drop in small molded balls and keep moving them
6. When lightly brown place on a roasting dish in the oven
7. Cook for 15 minutes at 200 degrees Celsius
8. You can serve these with a heated pasata tomato sauce

Try the above with the following:

Super Powered Couscous

For lunch or dinner

Ingredients:

1 kg Roasting vegetables such as carrots, butternut squash, courgettes, aubergines, red onions, peppers and even fennel

Olive oil

Butter

250g Couscous

300ml of boiling water

Method

1. Prepare your vegetables and place in a hot roasting tin with plenty of olive oil, salt, pepper and garlic to taste
2. Roast at 200 degrees Celsius for 30 minutes
3. Place the couscous in a heatproof bowl and add boiling water to just cover the couscous
4. Cover with a plate and leave for 10 minutes
5. Fork the couscous into fluffy individual grains
6. Add butter and salt and pepper to taste
7. Fold in the roasted vegetables and serve.

Chick Pea and Spinach Curry

Ingredients:

1 tbsp vegetable

1 medium onion, finely chopped

2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped

2 cm root ginger, finely chopped

2 tbsp Tikka Masala paste

1 tbsp Madras Curry paste

400g can of chopped tomatoes

100g red split lentils

150g spinach

400g can of chick peas

4 tbsp fresh coriander, chopped

4 tbsp natural yogurt

is also very important for making serotonin which is the "feel good" brain chemical which helps prevent obesity.

Spinach is high in folic acid and this is critical during pregnancy for the development of brain nerves. It is always essential for brain and nerve function and again for bringing down the risk of high homocysteine. As mentioned in the Horizon program, 'The Truth About Fat', the balance of brain activity is important in managing appetite but also feeling full and satisfied on less food.

Chick peas are excellent for balancing hormones as well as keeping blood sugars even, so if you are planning to lose weight switching to chickpeas in your diet will be extremely helpful. Due to their high protein and fiber content they help to control hunger. Salads containing chickpeas are tasty and help you to feel full for longer. They are also rich in calcium and are considered equal to yogurt and milk in providing calcium to the body. Chickpeas contain iron which is an integral component of hemoglobin, which transports oxygen around the body. But watch out for the salt levels in ready-made humous!

Onions contain sulphur in the form of amino acids called methionine and cystine. These protect against heavy metals such as mercury, cadmium (from smoking) and lead toxicity. Onions can help keep your brain clean and protect the genetic disposition of your baby as the heavy metals interfere with accurate DNA production.

Lentils are rich in phyto-oestrogens and are extremely low glycaemic and so regulate your insulin levels and hence keep your blood sugars on an even keel and lower those sugar cravings. They are good during pregnancy and also in weight loss

Method

1. Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium-high heat
2. Add the onion, ginger and garlic and cook for 3-5 minutes
3. Add the Tikka Masala and Madras Curry paste and cook for 3-4 minutes, some water may need to be added
4. Tip the tomatoes, lentils and 300ml of water into the pan and leave to simmer for 30 mins
5. Stir in handfuls of the spinach
6. Add the chick peas, cook for 3-4 minutes, stirring constantly
7. Serve with chopped coriander and yogurt.

Nutritional Research - Why is your friend thinner than you?

1. Genetics - It appears that our genes for storing fat are switched on or off by our mother's diet. This research was carried out by St Thomas' Hospital and they found a very strong correlation. So what your mother ate during pregnancy triggers which genes express themselves. How important is that if you're pregnant? See my list of foods recipes above to help you.

2. Gut and Brain Link - It has also been found that the procedure of stomach stapling changes the brain patterns of fat and sugar desire. The craving for sugar and fat was eliminated for the interviewees. This was very conclusive and was seen in MRI imaging. The brain scans after stomach stapling of previously overweight people appeared to be the same as that of a normal weight people.

3. Serotonin - We know that chocolate satisfies our desire for "good mood". This is because it raises serotonin levels in the brain. We also know that adequate populations of good bacteria are important in serotonin balance so stop feeding the bad bacteria with too much chocolate and replace with the recipes above.

recipes.

Ginger root contains zinc which is a component of DNA and RNA. These are essential for growth and controlling hormones that are messengers to organs such as the testes and ovaries and promote a healthy nervous system and brain in the growing fetus.



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