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FOOD SCIENCE AND NUTRITION

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Another Christmas and another battle not to eat too much of festive fayre, watching go onto to the ever increasing waistline! We watch out for new diets that will magically take off the pounds, buying into the latest fad that promises us eternal youth!! However, the only thing that is going to make a difference is knowing the truth of the matter, eating and exercising sensibly and healthily.

Here are a few dieting myths to release you into a way of eating that does not rob you of eating your favourite foods but helps keep balance and perspective;

Very low calorie diets are the best way to lose weight

Wrong! When the body is starved of food, it resets the mechanism for burning fat for energy, slowing it down to save calories. This means you burn less calories because your body is on "famine alert" and increases the efficiency by which it uses calories. However when you resume to your normal diet, your metabolism (rate at which your body burns calories for fat) does not go back to a faster rate, it stays at the slower rate. Therefore you regain the weight you lost and even put on new weight.

You have to count calories to lose weight



FOOD SCIENCE

Winter Nutrition - Keep healthy during winter with these nutrition tips!

Vitamin C for winter colds

Why it's important - vitamin c is vital for supporting the cells of the immune system as they use it to fight off unwanted microorganisms in the body. High levels of vitamin C need to be maintained in order to protect the cells from free radicals that come from bacteria, parasites and viruses.

Where it can be found - citrus fruits, dark green vegetables and other fruits such as strawberries and tomatoes.



Wrong! By counting calories, it is more likely that you starve your self of vital nutrients and eat the wrong balance of food which contributes to eating distress. For example, fat contains 9 calories/gm compared to carbohydrates and protein which contain 4 calories/gm. This means a low calorie diet will omit mainly fats, good and bad. It has been shown by research that on a very low fat diet, you lose less weight than those including some "good" fats such as oily fish and nuts and seeds. "Good" fats are vital for good mood heart health and hormone balance.

Skipping meals is a good way to lose weight

Wrong! This way your blood sugars will dip rather than stay constant. This causes cravings of fast release sugary foods, which quickly raises your insulin levels. Insulin then brings down your blood sugar levels and you can swing from high to low blood sugar levels, causing mood swings, eating distress and will encourage your body to store fat. Eating little and often will help even out this "blood sugar rollercoaster".

Starchy foods like bread and potatoes make you fat

Wrong! Starchy foods especially in the form of wholegrains, contain important nutrients such as B vitamins. These vitamins are vital for making energy and when low cause fatigue, depression, poor concentration and anxiety. This then causes eating distress and cravings for sweet and refined foods which do not contain the fibre for fullness and satiety and sustained slow release energy.

Deprive yourself of your favourite foods and you will lose weight

Being deprived is not a great way to enjoy life.

Water for dry skin

Why it's important - During winter, people tend not to drink as much water as they may not feel hot, or perspire as much as they would in the summer.

However, water is important to keep hydrated. As well as not drinking enough water, dry skin can also be caused by cold and windy weather dehydrating the skin. Other signs of dehydration include headaches, lack of energy and feeling lightheaded.

Where it can be found - As well as drinking water, water is found in foods, however we should aim to drink 1.2 litres of fluids everyday.

Serotonin for dark day blues

Why it's important - Serotonin is a 'feel-good' hormone and a normal level of it promotes feelings of happiness. Low serotonin levels can result in chronic fatigue, appetite/sleep disturbance, difficulties focusing and concentrating and low self-esteem.

Where it can be found - high quality carbohydrates such as whole grains - this includes sweet potato, pumpkins and squashes. Complex carbohydrates such as brown rice, potato and wholegrain pasta are also effective.

Vitamin D for bone health

Why it's important - During winter months, there is less sunlight and people do not

When we diet we automatically cut out our favourite comfort foods. Our bodies fight against deprivation and our brains fight against deprivation. The bigger the deprivation the bigger the fall! If we consciously deny ourselves something time and time again, we are likely to end up craving it more. We make over 200 food related decisions each day-we cannot rely on our cognitive control, ie will power. You end up with failure and even more eating disress. You are fighting an evolutionary instinct to eat as often as we can and as much as we can. Therefore a little of what you fancy does you good!

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BBC Three Counties (@BBC3CR) September 13, 2012

expose their skin as much as in summer. A lack in vitamin D is related to the increased risk in developing osteoporosis, fractures and particularly hip fractures later on in life. Vitamin D is essential for the proper absorption of calcium, bone development, control of cell growth and immune functioning.

Where it can be found -
Fish is a very good source of vitamin D, the best fish is Atlantic Herring followed by salmon. Fortified cereals, oysters, salami, ham and sausages also contain decent amounts of the essential vitamin.



Liver cleansing after Christmas over-indulgence

After drinking too much alcohol or overindulging by eating too much food during the festive period, the liver can become overworked. It cannot process toxins and fat in an efficient way. There are many foods that can help stimulate the liver to clean toxic waste from the body.

Foods that cleanse the liver - Garlic is an excellent food for cleansing the liver as it activates liver enzymes and helps your body flush out toxins. Grapefruit is high in vitamin C and antioxidants that increase the natural cleaning processes of the liver. A glass of grapefruit juice will

help the production of liver detoxification enzymes that help flush out carcinogens and other toxins. Other good foods for liver cleansing include beets, carrots, green tea and leafy green vegetables.

Natural live yoghurt for a healthy gut

Why it's important - Natural live yoghurt contains active and living bacterial cultures (probiotics), which contribute greatly towards keeping a healthy gut. As well as aiding the gut, the bacterial cultures help to boost the immune system. The health benefits of the probiotics in natural live yoghurt are that they improve digestion, fight infection, have anti-cancer properties, promotes clear skin and improves cholesterol levels.

Where it can be found - most yoghurts say 'made with live cultures' however they need to be active. Look for yoghurts that have 'contains live cultures' or 'contains live probiotic cultures' in the ingredients. The specific cultures should also be listed, look out for: lactobacillus acidophilus, bifidobacterium longum, streptococcus thermophilus and lactobacillus bulgaricus.

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