Seeking New Ways to Lose Wisely

The holiday celebrations, and the overindulgence that they bring, are over. Many people now make the commitment to lose extra pounds and become fit. Perhaps the bathroom scale is reading too high or clothing that once fit comfortably now binds. Whatever your motivator, I wish you success. My hope is for you to have a healthier body. Don’t you deserve that?

There are many diet plans and products promoted today, all claiming to rid followers of unwanted pounds. How do you know which diet is best for you? Can you be assured the diet or product is safe and effective? Before spending your hard earned money on gimmicks that will do little to help and may even cause you harm, read the fact sheet- Dietary Supplements for Weight Loss on the NIH Office of Dietary Supplements website at http://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/WeightLoss-HealthProfessional/

It summarizes the multitude of supplements on the market, which consumer’s fork out, pun intended, two billion dollars a year.

Just imagine, instead, that two billion dollars were spent on real weight loss solutions like….healthier food, nutritional counseling with a registered dietitian nutritionist, gym memberships, and/or personal trainers. As you reach for your wallet ask yourself, will this really get me the results I’m looking for? Perhaps it is time to try another strategy.

Most dieters know tons, literally, about losing weight. They can cite the calorie of every food and ways to prepare it to get the leanest plate possible. They are motivated and do not lack willpower. Many are stress eaters and reach for food as a way to decompress after a long day. A better strategy would be to learn new coping techniques like journaling, talking to a friend or counselor, exercising, learning to meditate, prayer, etc. Instead of buying yet another weight loss supplement, spend that money on a qualified therapist or seek out a place of worship. Even if you do not lose a single ounce you will feel better emotionally and spiritually.

Group support can be the vital link for weight loss success. Weight Watchers is proof and to this day it is one of the most effective diet plans out there. With internet technology you can get support at the touch of a button. Other support systems are Overeaters Anonymous and TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly). All three groups have meetings in the Frederick area.
Exercise can be a great way to both lose and maintain weight and perhaps have some fun in the process. I feel fortunate, it is my number one way to destress, and it happens to burn calories in the process. I began this decade making my New Year’s resolution to try at least one new physical activity each year. I am not getting any younger so I view the ability to move as a real blessing. I’ve tried Pilates, yoga, kayaking, skiing, snow tubing, golf, and even zip lining. Some I barely managed to complete, others like Pilates and kayaking, I hope to do for life. All burn calories and make weight control much simpler than always skipping dessert.

Whatever strategy you choose, you can get personalized nutrition and physical activity plans at the USDA Choose My Plate website http://www.choosemyplate.gov/ using the Super Tracker.

Here are two recipes that can easily fit into any sound diet plan. They are low in fat, but high in nutrition, and feature foods from several food groups. Best of all, they are delicious!

**GOOD MORNING BROWN RICE CEREAL**

2 cups brown rice  
1/8 teaspoon ground allspice  
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/2 cup dried apricots, cut into thin strips  
1/3 cup slivered toasted almonds  
1 Delicious apple, cored and chopped  
2 cups skim or 1% milk

Place rice, allspice, cinnamon, and 1 quart of water into a medium saucepan and bring to a boil over medium heat. Cover the pan, reduce the heat to low and cook 40 minutes or until the rice is tender and most of the water is absorbed. Add the apricots and cook another 5 minutes. Divide the rice mixture among 4 bowls, and sprinkle each serving equally with almonds and chopped apple. Pour 1/2 cup milk over each serving. Serves 4.

**FRUITED SPINACH SALAD**

*Serves 6*

1 (11 ounce) can mandarin oranges in light syrup, undrained  
1/4 teaspoon unflavored gelatin  
1 teaspoon lemon juice, divided  
1 teaspoon poppy seeds  
1/2 pound fresh spinach, washed, trimmed, and torn  
1 1/2 cups chopped red apple  
1/2 cup thinly sliced celery  
1/4 cup raisins  
2 tablespoons unsalted sunflower kernels
Drain oranges, reserving 1/2 cup liquid; set oranges aside. Combine 1/2 cup liquid and gelatin in a small, non-aluminum saucepan; let stand 1 minute. Place over medium heat; cook 2 minutes or until gelatin dissolves, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; stir in 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice and poppy seeds. Pour into a glass or stainless steel bowl. Cover and chill 3 hours.

Combine oranges, remaining 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice, spinach, apple, celery and raisins in a bowl; toss gently. Divide spinach mixture among 6 salad plates. Drizzle dressing evenly over salads, and sprinkle with sunflower kernels.

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