



Healthy Eating Offers Good Protection During the Chilly Season

As the temperature continues to drop in many areas of the country, people become increasingly challenged to maintain a healthy diet. On a chilly day, it's tempting to curl up on the couch with a bowl of canned (salty) soup or a pile of holiday treats. Keeping the body well nourished during the winter can be difficult, but it's crucial to prevent weight gain and ward off those pesky germs.

Here are some strategies to keep you on track:

- **Eat high-quality carbs** - Listen to your cravings because there is a reason for them! In the winter with fewer sunny hours, your stored serotonin (the "feel-good" brain chemical) starts to decline. Your cravings for carbohydrate-loaded comfort foods are your body's cries for more serotonin. But be careful when choosing carbohydrates to boost serotonin! Opt for nutritious whole grains and choose high-quality carbs such as sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and squashes.
- **Love seasonal produce** - Winter produce may not be as exciting and colorful as summer berries, but there are still many healthy choices available. Work seasonal produce such as pomegranates, cranberries, citrus fruits, purple grapes, and orange root vegetables (i.e. carrots, sweet potatoes, yams) into your meals. You'll not only add color to your plate, you'll pack in some serious nutrition punch.
- **Consider Vitamin D Supplements** - Another lesser known reason that healthy eating can be so difficult in the winter is the lack of sunlight. As it gets darker earlier, we get less exposure to the sun. Sunshine is the best natural source of vitamin D, so during the winter months you should consider vitamin D supplements. Vitamin D can also be found in fortified dairy products, fatty fish, and egg yolks.
- **Nourish your cold** - Despite numerous claims you may have heard, no diet remedy or supplement has scientifically proved effective at preventing cold and flu. However, studies have shown that 1,000 mg of vitamin C supplements may make your cold milder and shorten it by half a day. In addition, there's a promising perk for yogurt lovers! A study found that probiotics (as found in yogurt with active culture) may shorten your cold episode by almost two days. So keep on eating those "friendly" bugs!

**Move a little,
live a lot longer!**

Go for a brisk 30-minute walk five days a week and you will lower your risk of heart disease by 14 percent, according to a study in the journal of Circulation.

Protect your kids from Obesity

Almost 1 in 3 American children are obese. Help your youngsters buck the trend by modeling healthful attitudes toward eating and weight loss. Try these smart strategies.

- ✓ **Focuses on the positive** – Instead of dwelling on the negative talk about dieting, ask your family for their help in achieving your own weight-loss goal (by planning menus, picking out food at the store, taking walks together). As you lose weight, point out how much better you feel physically. If you have setbacks, avoid comments disparaging your willpower. You want your children to know that getting healthy is fun and rewarding.
- ✓ **Add more protein** – If you eat a lot of carbs but not enough protein, your kids might too – and that's a problem. Studies show that kids who lack protein don't do as well in school. Protein helps fuel the brain. Include more protein choices at every meal. Start your family's day with eggs or high-protein cereals. They'll be more satisfied and eat less.
- ✓ **Express your feelings** - If you smother difficult emotions with food, try talking about them with a friend or therapist, or writing them down in a journal. Likewise, avoid comforting your kids with food if they have a bad day. If they say they feel fat, encourage them to explain why instead of dismissing their statements. Acknowledging your children's worries and helping them take action reinforces the idea that food should be viewed as a fuel, not a fix.

Vegetable Fried Rice



Sometimes feeding the little ones can be a difficult task – especially when it comes to brown rice. Here is one brown rice recipe that even the pickiest of eaters will love.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup brown rice (cooked equals about 3 cups)
- 1 cup mixed frozen vegetables (usually corn, peas, beans, red peppers)
- 1 Tbsp olive or canola oil
- 2 eggs, scrambled
- Dash of fresh or dried basil or parsley, to taste

Cook rice. Saute vegetables in olive oil to desired consistency. Scramble eggs. Mix all the cooked ingredients together and serve.

Visit our website at www.eatlearnlive.com

This institution is an equal opportunity provider