

Learn 'ins and outs' of nutrition and fitness

Nutrition and fitness fads come and go, but common sense and moderation never go out of style.

"In compiling our list of what experts say is 'in' and what is 'out,' we found a very healthy trend toward basic food and fitness activities," said Martha Pehl, registered dietitian, and food and nutrition consultant to the Sugar Association.

"Realistic eating and exercise habits are easier to maintain than stressful 'quick-results' regimens," Pehl said, "so you're more likely to realize long-term benefits."

Here is the Sugar Association's compilation of what's "in" and what's "out" in nutrition and fitness.

IN: Moderation and Balance.

OUT: "Dieting"

"If you follow the basic rules of moderation and balance, you may never have to 'go on a diet' again," Pehl says.

Eating a variety of foods in moderate amounts and following a daily routine of physical exercise will do more for your health and figure than all the starvation diets and reducing gadgets in the world.

Your body reacts to low calorie diets by turning down metabolism as a protection against starvation. Exercise can help our body use more calories without going hungry.

IN: Walking
OUT: Running

"Walking is a very efficient way to burn calories," Pehl says, "and it's much easier on the body than running or jogging." A brisk two-mile walk (about 40 minutes) burns about 160 calories and can easily fit into a busy schedule.

Walking stairs instead of riding the elevator and getting off the bus a few stops before you have to are some of the ways you can incorporate walking into your lifestyle.

IN: Sugar
OUT: Artificial sweeteners.

"If you're counting calories, there's no need to give up sugar," says Pehl. Sugar has only 16 calories a teaspoon, fewer than half as many as fat.

It's easy to incorporate sugar and other favorite foods into a weight-loss plan if you remember moderation.

Studies show that artificial sweeteners are not effective weight-loss aids, probably because their sweetness fools the tongue, but not the body.

"You may think you're saving calories with synthetic sweeteners, but experts say that people may simply compensate by taking in more calories from other sources," Pehl said.

IN: "Grazing"

OUT: "Three-square-meals."
Busy lifestyles dictate different eating patterns these days. We're cooking fewer large meals and relying on snacks and smaller meals instead.

This style of eating suits the new nutrition-consciousness because it emphasizes lightness and quality, rather than quantity of food consumed.

"It was never a good idea to skip breakfast or lunch so you could gorge yourself at dinner," Pehl says. "You can space your calorie intake efficiently by eating several small meals throughout the day. Just remember the basic rules of balance and moderation."

IN: Adult non-alcoholic drinks
OUT: Alcohol.

"The days of the three-martini lunch are gone forever," Pehl says. "And, thanks to stiffer drunk driving laws, people are cutting way down on all drinking."

Serving a non-alcoholic drink is a way of telling your friends you care for them. "Instead of falling back on standard colas, preparing a homemade drink is a wonderful way to offer guests a refreshingly delicious beverage that is safe for their diet as well as their driving record," she concludes.

GINGERITA

1 cup fresh squeezed lemon juice

three-quarter cup granulated sugar

3 tbsp. fresh ginger root, peeled and minced

Few gratings of yellow skin from lemon rind.

In a stainless steel or enamel saucepan combine all ingredients. Bring to a boil, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Simmer about 10 minutes. Cook to lukewarm. Strain through a fine sieve, pressing firmly on solids to extract all liquid.

Garnish the rim of an 8 oz. wine glass with sugar. Put one fourth granulated sugar crystals in a saucer, wet the rim of the glass and shake off excess water. Turn the glass upside down and rotate the rim in the sugar to coat lightly.

Place two ice cubes in the bottom of the glass and add one to two tablespoons of the syrup. Top off with seltzer water or club soda, and add a lemon slice for garnish.

Yield: Approximately one cup of syrup. Approximately 35 calories per tablespoon.

For additional hints on getting — and keeping — fit, write for your free brochure, The Nutrition/Fitness Puzzle; c/o The Sugar Association Inc., 1101 15th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005.

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