

Smart Choices

Nutrition News

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Losing Weight and Keeping It Off— What Really Works?

For most people, extra body fat accumulates slowly over time. Eating just 50 extra calories a day (about the amount in 1/2 tablespoon of butter) will lead to a gain of approximately five pounds per year. Fat is put on slowly and that is the best way to take it off also.

It doesn't take a dramatic change in diet or activity level to promote a gradual loss in body fat. By making small changes in both, you can work towards a healthy weight goal. If you cut food intake by 100 calories per day, you could lose 10 pounds in a year. Walking briskly for 30 minutes each day could take off another 10 pounds in a year.

The secret is including healthy foods and activities you enjoy as part of a healthy lifestyle. This is not a fad diet, but a healthy lifestyle that replaces old behav-

iors. Try these small changes that can make a big difference:

- Use half the amount of margarine, butter and mayonnaise on foods.
 - Choose low-fat varieties of foods such as cheese, milk, yogurt, fish, meat or poultry.
 - Trim the fat off meats or buy lean meats.
 - Eat smaller portions of high-calorie foods.
 - Eat fried foods in moderation.
- Eat a healthy breakfast each morning.
- Eat when you are hungry and stop eating when you feel full.
- Eat only half of restaurant portions and take the rest home for another meal. Be sure to refrigerate the leftovers within 2 hours to keep them safe to eat.

- Avoid super-sized fast food meals.
- Eat all of the vegetables and fruits you want. They are naturally low in fat and calories. They are also packed with nutrients that our bodies need for good health.
- Cook at home rather than eating out.
- Walk, walk, walk, walk!
- Find a physical activity that you enjoy and stick with it.



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Storing Fresh Fruits & Veggies

Proper storage is an important part of getting the most for your money when buying fruits and vegetables. First, select food at its peak freshness. Fruits and vegetables that contain a lot of water, such as lettuce or cucumbers, must be used within a couple of days, but low water vegetables such as turnips and broccoli can be stored longer. Select fruits and vegetables without any breaks or bruises in the skin. Avoid those that appear to be overripe. If you buy fruit and vegetables in shrink wrapped packages, inspect the package closely for any signs of mold. Store potatoes at room temperature. Check out the table below for guidelines on storage.

Green Bean and Potato Salad

3/4 pounds green beans, trimmed and halved
1 large red potato, diced
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
4 ounces cherry tomatoes, halved
1/2 teaspoon dried basil
1/2 teaspoon dried parsley



Drop green beans into a pot of boiling water and cook for 4 minutes. Drain and let cool. Drop potato into boiling water and cook until tender. Drain and let dry.

Dressing:

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice (about 1 lemon)
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
2 tablespoons olive or canola oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Mix lemon juice, garlic and oil. Add salt and pepper to taste. Toss the green beans, potatoes, tomatoes and herbs together. Add dressing and mix well.

Yields: 3 servings (1 cup each)

Calories per serving: 95, carbohydrates 8.5 grams, protein 1.5 grams, fat 5 grams, sodium 65 milligrams, fiber 2.5 grams

Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables . . .

Produce:

Apples
Broccoli
Cabbage
Carrots
Grapes
Melons
Plums
Pears
Peaches
Lettuce
Squash, summer
Squash, winter
Tomatoes

Refrigerator:

3 weeks
3—5 days
1—2 weeks
3 weeks
1 week
5 days
5 days
5 days
4 days
3—7 days
4—5 days
2 weeks
2—3 days

What's the Purpose of Food Stamps?

The goal of the Food Stamp Program is helping people with limited incomes improve their nutrition for better health and disease prevention. The program is available to all eligible persons. Food stamp coupons have been replaced by an electronic card that looks and works just like a typical debit or credit card used by any grocery shopper. No one but you and the grocery check-out clerk will know you are using food stamps. The Food Stamp Program can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact 1-888-LAHELPU or visit www.dss.state.la.us.

Provided by LSU AgCenter Community Nutrition Programs

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To find out how to apply, call 1-888-LAHELPU or visit: www.dss.state.la.us to download an application for Food Stamps