

Nutritional Tips for Fall and Winter Months

Summers are often hectic with kids' schedules and family vacations. Nutritious meals take a back burner from Little League season on to Labor Day. Summer fun may be over, but many of us may be stuck with the left over fat from the cookouts. View the beginning of fall as a great time to wipe the slate clean and shape up nutritionally for the winter. The best results occur with gradual changes rather than the "cold turkey" or "fad diet" approach. Get back on track with the basics:



Eat a variety of foods. There are no good or bad foods, just those that should be eaten more frequently and those that should be eaten sparingly.

Include plenty of fruits and vegetables in your diet. These foods are low in fat and calories, but packed with nutrients and fiber. Strive for five servings a day.

Drink plenty of water. The temperature may be cooling off, but your body's need for water is constant. Try eight glasses per day. Beverages that are caffeine, sodium and calorie-free can be included. Take advantage of herbal teas and decaffeinated coffees for an afternoon pick up.

Watch your fat intake. Strive for less than 30 percent of your total calories coming from fat. Read the nutrition fact sheet, identifying total grams of fat per serving. Remember if you double or triple the serving size, you also double or triple the fat grams.

Watch your calorie intake. A rule of thumb is to multiply your current body weight by 10 to give a rough estimate of the calories you need to maintain your current weight. If you want to lose a few pounds, step up on the exercise and reduce your calorie intake. Never go below 1,000 to 1,200 calories per day. Consumption of less than 1,000 calories makes it difficult to receive all nutrients necessary for good health. Set a goal of exercising at least three times per week. The more you move the more calories you burn.

Set short-term goals. Instead of saying 10 pounds by the holidays, set a goal of having a great three days of eating and exercise. Once you meet your goal, set another and then another. Once again, get moving and don't stop.

Build in favorite foods/treats. Little indulgences every few days will prevent rage binges after deprivation.

Plan ahead. Prepare a shopping list before and buy only foods on your program. Don't bring sabotage foods into the house. If you crave sweets, buy single servings for an occasional treat.

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