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Senior Health and Wellness Newsletter

Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living

Getting Back on Track for a New Year

If the holidays have gotten you off your healthy lifestyle track, take this time to get focused and ensure your diet is meeting your lifestyle needs. Though many fad diets are appealing to help “lose weight fast” or “eat this vs eat that”, they may not be appropriate for your lifestyle and/or chronic diseases. Many who choose the diet route, often discontinue after a short amount of time. These fad diets can be expensive, very restricting, unappealing after a while, or not realistically sustainable. A healthy lifestyle; however, does not have an end and it adjusts with your life.

A healthy lifestyle is when a person chooses to make choices that can improve their well-being, manage and/or prevent chronic diseases and improve overall health. A healthy lifestyle does not have to be expensive and can evolve over time. A healthy lifestyle consists of having an open communication with your full health care team (doctors, pharmacist, dietitian, therapists, etc...), healthy eating, physical activity, and proper support systems.

Talking to your healthcare team will ensure it is safe to make appropriate lifestyle changes. It may be better to choose one or two simple changes first before emptying out the kitchen cabinets and starting over. Make sure your medications will not be affected by these lifestyle changes. If they will, talk with your pharmacist and doctor about this.

Talk with a registered dietitian nutritionist about your current diet and lifestyle. The dietitian will be able to help you make appropriate changes to ensure you are meeting your body’s needs. Try keeping a food/activity journal to help stay on track. If you are having a plateau with your lifestyle goals, this journal will help find areas of concern. The dietitian will also help incorporate foods you love to ensure you follow your new lifestyle change. Make sure you drink plenty of water and avoid beverages with excessive sugar. It is important to incorporate lean meats and plenty of fruits and vegetables. The dietitian can also help read food labels as well as help make a shopping list to ensure this lifestyle is sustainable.

Physical activity can be a challenging task to incorporate. A gym membership is not required to be physically active. You can get enough physical activity by walking around the perimeter of a store prior to shopping, walking around a local gym that is open to public, and take walking breaks during long periods of sitting. You can do strength exercises using light weights or canned goods you have in your home. You should get 2.5 hours of physical activity per week.

Tips to a Healthy Lifestyle:

1. Look up recipes. Take the opportunity to try new things.
2. Keep a positive attitude about meals. Healthy lifestyle should be positive. Say “I can have...” rather than “I cannot have...”
3. Incorporate at least 4 food groups in meals and 2 food groups in snacks.
4. Drink plenty of water.
5. Make meals enjoyable. Invite friends and family over to try out new recipes.
6. Plan your meals ahead of time. Try to re-use ingredients you already have or will use in multiple recipes to help cut the costs.
7. Stop eating when you feel full. Before building your second plate of food, give yourself 10 minutes and ask yourself, ‘are you really hungry?’
8. Make your plate colorful by including a variety of fruits and vegetables. Take advantage of in-season produce.
9. Cut back on unhealthy foods (such as: fried foods, high sodium foods, and high sugary foods).
10. Incorporate at least 30 minutes of physical activity daily. Activity does not have to be completed in one setting.



*May your new year bring you health and happiness.
May your dime-cooked greens and/or cabbage bring all your wealth. And may your luck be ever in your favor with your black-eyed peas.*

References:

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-build-healthy-mealtime-habits>

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-make-better-food-choices>

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