

Optimal Weight for Life, L.L.C.

WEEK 1

Overview

In 1970, 5% of children were obese. Today, 20% of children are obese. 1/3 of all children are overweight. Being overweight in childhood, especially among older children and those with more severe obesity, is likely to persist into adulthood.

Therefore, childhood represents an important opportunity to establish healthy eating and activity behaviors that can protect children against future obesity and its associated health risks.

Both genes and environment contribute to the risk of obesity. At a population level, the increase in the prevalence of obesity has been too rapid to be explained by genes alone. Rather, children at risk have had alterations in their eating and physical activity behaviors which have contributed to the obesity epidemic. A large number of possible eating and activity behaviors that have contributed to an energy imbalance include greater sugar sweetened beverage intake, larger portion sizes at all meals and snacks, more frequent snacks, more ready to eat foods, more restaurant eating, more television viewing, fewer physical education classes, less walking to and from school, less outside play at home, more escalators, elevators, and automatic doors, and so forth.

Obesity threatens the health of today's children to such an extent that they may for the first time in U.S. history have a shorter lifespan than their parents.

Defining overweight and obesity

BMI, Body Mass Index, is a measure of body weight adjusted for height and is a useful tool in assessing body fat. BMI is defined in weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared.

BMI is a more useful tool than weight by itself because an individual who is 6 feet tall and 200 lbs. is better off than someone who is 5 feet tall and 200 lbs.

BMI levels correlate with body fat and also correlate with health risks, especially cardiovascular risk factors. High BMI predicts the likelihood of future obesity as well as future sickness and death.

There are two cutoff points that are important in regards to BMI. One is the 85th percentile and one is the 95th percentile. When BMI is less than the 85th percentile body fat levels are likely to pose little risk. When BMI is greater than or equal to the 95th percentile, body fat levels are likely to be high. BMI levels between the 85th and 94th percentiles are in the cautionary range.

Unfortunately, the need for a third cutoff point is evolving. This cutoff point recognizes BMI in the 99th percentile and represents children at highest risk for the negative health consequences of severe obesity.

These negative health consequences of obesity include the following:

- 100 per cent more likely to develop heart disease
- 1020 per cent more likely to develop diabetes
- 122 per cent more likely to have total cholesterol above 250
- Likely to spend 105 per cent more a year at the pharmacy
- Likely to stay 49 per cent longer in the hospital
- 50 per cent more likely to have asthma
- 330 per cent more likely to develop stomach cancer
- 150 per cent more likely to develop gall stones
- 1520 per cent more likely to develop esophageal cancer
- 70 per cent more likely to develop kidney cancer
- 34 per cent more likely to have osteoarthritis
- 170 per cent more likely to develop high blood pressure

WEIGHT LOSS GOALS

The major advantage a child has over an adult is that a child gets taller and an adult doesn't. Thus, in many instances a child does not need to lose weight but rather simply stop gaining weight until his or her height increases and places him or her in an acceptable BMI range.

Current recommendations for weight loss in children as determined by the American Academy of Pediatrics:

2-5 year olds: BMI 85th – 94th percentile with health risks – weight maintenance
>95th percentile – weight maintenance or weight loss of up to 11lb./month

6-11 year olds: BMI 85th - 94th percentile with health risks – weight maintenance
95th – 99th percentile – gradual weight loss of 1lb./month
>99th percentile – weight loss (maximum is 2lb./wk.)

12-18 year olds: BMI 85th – 94th percentile with health risks – weight maintenance
95th – 99th percentile – weight loss maximum is 2lb./wk.
99th percentile – weight loss maximum is 2lb./wk.

With this being said, children in this program who make good food choices and exercise can expect to lose 1 to 2 pounds per week or 5 to 10 pounds over ten weeks. This is what you should safely expect your child to lose.

Food Diary/Calorie Counter

Here is what the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends kids get calorie-wise each day.

Calories

2 -3 years: 1000 calories/day
4-8 years: 1200 – 1400 calories/day
9-13(female): 1600 calories/day
9-13(male): 1800 calories/day
14-18(female): 1800 calories/day
14-18(male): 2200 calories/day

In order to lose weight, we have to burn or use more energy than we consume. If we consume more calories than our body needs, we store those extra calories as fat. How many calories do we consume each day? We probably have no idea. During week one, we want to see how many calories we are taking in on average each day. To do this, I am giving you a food and exercise journal and the Calorie King Calorie Counter.

A food journal is the most powerful proven aid for dieters. Persons who keep a food and exercise diary not only lose more weight they also keep it off. Recording your eating and exercise habits jolts you into realizing just what you do eat and drink each day; and also whether you exercise sufficiently. It helps you identify problem foods and drinks with excessive calories and fat. It helps identify moods, situations and events that lead to excessive eating of unwanted calories. It prevents calorie amnesia, the forgetfulness that

leads to rebound weight gain. It helps you develop greater self-discipline. You will think twice about over-indulging if you have to record it.

This first week of the program I want each child to eat what they would normally eat during the week and I want them to record EVERYTHING!! After the first week, we will be able to look at the food journals and see what the problem foods are and start substituting nutrient dense foods for nutrient poor foods. The biggest mistake I see this first week is that patients don't record everything that they eat. Parents please work with your child this week to help them record what they eat.

This program also includes a Calorie King Calorie Counter to let you know how many calories are in every food that you eat. You should be able to find pretty much any food in this book. It also has a section on fast food restaurants. The calories are based on serving size. Below are some examples of what a serving size is.

Serving sizes

1 cup of fruit/vegetables = the size of a baseball

3 oz meat = size of a cassette tape

1 cup of pasta = size of a deck of cards

1 cup of milk = size of a tennis ball

A good rule of thumb for portion size is the size of your fist. When you are putting something on your plate make sure it is no bigger than the size of your fist.

It is easy to underestimate portion size of foods and drinks, and unwittingly consume excess calories. To more accurately estimate portion size of different foods, weigh and measure your food with food scales, measuring spoons and cups. Better control of calories will result.

Food for thought: Since 1977, the typical serving size for a soft drink has increased by 49 calories; French fries by 68 calories; and hamburgers by 97 calories. A Happy Meal today is the same size as the regular meal for adults thirty years ago!!

One easy way to short-circuit this growing trend is to buy smaller bowls and cups.

Correct portion size also depends on the amount of calories in a given food, but it's not too hard to figure that out. The more fat or sugar an item has –i.e. the more it resembles dessert-the smaller the serving size.

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WEEK 2

QUANTITY OF FOODS and QUALITY OF FOODS

In 1992 the U.S. Department of Agriculture replaced the popular concept of four food groups with The Food Guide Pyramid. The new pyramid gave greater prominence to plant foods, stressing that grains, fruits, and vegetables are the basis of a healthy diet. Meat and dairy products were placed further up in the pyramid, to show that people should eat less of these foods.

The pyramid is a guide to filling your plate with the right food proportions: mostly grains, fruits, and vegetables; adequate legumes, dairy, fish, poultry, and meat; fewer fats and sweets.

The Food Guide Pyramid

Bread, cereal, rice, and pasta:	6 – 11 servings per day
Vegetables:	3 – 5 servings per day
Fruits:	2 – 4 servings per day
Milk, yogurt, cheese:	2 – 3 servings per day
Meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, nuts:	2 – 3 servings per day
Fats, oils, and sweets:	use sparingly

Many Americans don't live by the Food Guide Pyramid but rather the Food Guide Hourglass. They eat lots of grains and lots of meats and fats and sweets but very few fruits and vegetables. Do you realize that 1/3 of the vegetables eaten by children are French fries and iceberg lettuce.

Most diet plans for children stress a diet that includes a minimum of 5 servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Your goal this week is to try every day this week to eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables.

While the Food Guide Pyramid tells us the quantities of foods to eat each day, it does not tell us the quality of food to eat. I could eat the correct number of foods in each category and not be a very healthy eater. For instance, I could eat fried chicken instead of baked chicken. I could eat a biscuit as opposed to eating whole wheat bread. I could eat French fries instead of eating broccoli. So, while it is important to eat 3 – 5 servings of

vegetables each day, it is also important to make sure those 3 – 5 servings are NOT French fries.

Modern food science confirms what grandmother taught: “As long as you have lots of color on your plate, you’re eating healthy.” The stuff that gives color to your food is the same stuff that provides nutrients to your body. Those color-rich biochemicals are called phytonutrients (meaning, plant nutrients) or phyto for short. In general, the darker the food, the more nutritious it is, such as the deep blue of blueberries, the dark red of tomatoes, the deep red of grapes, the deep orange of a sweet potato, and the dark green of broccoli, kale and peppers. Choose colorful foods over less colored ones. As a general rule the worst color in food is white especially foods that have been man made white by processing such as white flour and white rice. In these two foods the most nutritious brown part of the food has been factory removed by processing or bleaching and the colorless stuff that remains is nutrient poor. So, leave the white bread for the birds. Think brown.

We are living in a post-fad-diet moment, a time when scientists, doctors and nutritionists have returned to the notion that what matters most for maintaining a healthy weight is not what you put into your body but how much. It’s as simple as teaching yourself to eat less.

My Food Journal Observations from Week One

- 1.) Every day I had calorie amnesia and forgot something to include in my journal. Either I forgot to include calories from the bread that I had on my sandwich or I forgot the coffee I had that morning or I forgot the saltines that I had with my soup only to remember them later. I’m forgetting calories and I am trying my hardest to remember and keep track of them. Imagine the amnesia we experience when we are not trying to keep track of our calories!!
- 2.) Unlike what I asked you to do, I tried to eat healthy this week. I was really surprised at some foods that I ate. For example, a serving of green beans only has 17 calories! Wow!! Also, I tried to keep my calories around 1800 calories a day and I discovered that I could eat those number of calories and feel full. The key though is that you have to eat healthy. You can’t eat junk. Let me say that again. You don’t have to starve to lose weight. You just have to eat right and make good food choices!!
- 3.) Beware the weekend. There is a lot more free time on the weekend to be bad and

a greater tendency to eat out on the weekend. I would definitely recommend exercising for an hour on Saturday and Sunday. The calories you burn exercising will help counterbalance if you slip up a little bit on the weekend. Also, try and be really good earlier in the week so that on the weekend if you do slip up a little bit you will have built up credit earlier in the week.

- 4.) You may discover that sometimes it is difficult to find the exact calorie amount of the foods that you eat. Just do the best that you can. Sometimes you may overestimate and sometimes you may underestimate.

This program is not a question of changing everything all at once. That doesn't work. Doing too much at one time is why 80 per cent of conventional dieters regain the weight they lose within one year of stopping their diet. It's easy to sustain an ambitious regimen for a short time, but most dieters soon revert to their old ways. The whole point of adopting a lower-calorie approach is that it's not a temporary fix; it's a lifestyle change. We are trying to alter your attitude toward food: It's about being more conscious of what goes into your body and focusing on eating more nutrient dense foods and less calorie dense foods.

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WEEK #3: EXERCISE

Diet and exercise are equal partners in a healthy lifestyle. Exercising boosts your metabolism. Combine exercise with a diet of nutrient dense foods without empty calories, and you are much more likely to STAY lean than you would if you only cut back on calories.

The good news is that the people who need exercise the most (the overweight, sedentary, poorly nourished, etc.) are the ones most helped by it.

Exercise contributes to your health in these ways:

- 1.) burns fat
- 2.) increases muscle, which burns calories
- 3.) decreases the risk of nearly all major diseases
- 4.) releases feel good hormones that contribute to your overall sense of well-being

Exercise reduces the risk and severity of adult-onset diabetes. Exercise boosts the efficiency of insulin, helping it remove sugar from the blood before it can be stored as fat.

Exercise boosts immunity. It increases our white cell count and our body's killer cells.

Exercise lowers cholesterol. When combined with a low fat diet, exercise can reduce our levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol twice as effectively as diet alone. Exercise also increases levels of HDL (good) cholesterol.

Exercise builds stamina. Exercise improves the efficiency with which the muscles can use oxygen.

Exercise builds a healthy heart. Exercise builds muscle and when you exercise you build the heart muscle.

Exercise slows aging. Nearly all the physiological changes that are associated with aging are delayed with exercise.

Exercise increases lifespan.

Exercise builds muscle and it also builds bone. One reason exercise helps build bone is that exercising bodies tend to excrete less calcium through the kidneys than sedentary bodies do.

Exercise improves mood. Exercise releases endorphins, the body's own internal opiates, or mood elevating pain relieving hormones. It's on the days you least feel like exercising that you'll notice the endorphin effect the most. It relieves tension and soothes stress. Endorphins even curb food cravings. The neurochemicals that are released during exercise can not only calm you if you're anxious but also pull you out of a depression.

Exercise sparks the brain. Because exercise increases blood flow to the brain, it's as good for the brain as it is for the body.

Exercise and eating right are partners in health. Dieting without exercise leads to little or no permanent fat loss, and possibly a fat gain. Exercise without good nutrition equals little or no fat loss. Dieting plus exercise equals lots of fat loss. You don't burn off much fat while you are doing the exercise. While you exercise, you burn mostly carbohydrates. The fat burning occurs the twelve hours after exercise, when your metabolic rate is elevated. That is why morning exercise is likely to yield a greater fat loss than exercise in the evening or before bed. Sleep depresses your metabolic rate. So, the best time for exercise is the first thing in the morning. Late afternoon, before dinner, is also a good time to exercise as you'll eat less at dinner and burn calories all evening long.

Here's the best nutritional deal in the body: The more muscle you put on, the more fat you are likely to take off. The reason is that muscle tissue, even just resting there, burns more calories than fat tissue, which essentially burns very little. Every pound of extra muscle you put on automatically burns 50 to 100 extra calories a day. So, just by adding an extra pound of muscle to your body, you could automatically burn as many as ten pounds of fat a year. Exercise causes an increase in fat burning enzymes in the muscles.

RESETTING YOUR FAT POINT

Buried somewhere in the brain, physiologists believe, is a sort of APPESTAT, which regulates how often and how much you eat. This appestat control is the fat point, the fat level your body has gotten used to. Your body believes it needs to maintain this fat level to protect you against the day when food may not be so plentiful. It believes this fat level is important to your well being and it will strive to maintain this level of body fat. So your body resists any attempt to lose fat or to lower the fat point, which is one of the reasons people who lose weight tend to regain it. If you suddenly start to eat less your body thinks, "Oh no, it's a famine. Hoard the fat." Your metabolic rate slows and your

appetite increases. You may struggle to stay on your diet, and your fat point insists that you store fat rather than burn it. Losing weight becomes very difficult, but if you follow your appetite and eat more, you may push your fat point even higher. What you have to do is reset the fat point by gradually easing down your calories. The fat point gradually lowers, and your body becomes more comfortable with the idea of burning fat stores, because there seem to be adequate amounts of food available. Exercise plays an important role in resetting your fat point. If you've been dieting and losing weight steadily but then reach a plateau, your body has probably decided this is a good fat balance for you. Stepping up the amount of exercise you do will push your body back into fat burning mode and you'll continue to lose.

CRASH DIETS

Crash diets often give you a rapid weight loss in what you see on the scale. For these diets, weight loss does not equate with fat loss, since you are often losing water weight or muscle weight. Both of these types of weight loss are potentially harmful to your well being. The reason for this false weight loss is that during the first week or two on a crash diet, the body first loses protein and water, since the wisdom of the body tells it to hold on to the fat as its last reserve. This loss of protein and water is the reason most people feel lousy during the first week or two on a crash diet. Another reason that crash diets are bad for your health is that they cut out not only the bad fats but the good fats too causing the dieter to have a deficiency in essential fatty acids, which can compromise a person's health. The key to fat control is not only eating less fat, but eating the right fats. Not only are crash diets unhealthy, but many crash dieters eat more and regain more fat once they discard the diet. The body was used to the fat it had and wants it back. Another reason that crash diets fail is they do not respect the interplay between insulin, carbohydrates, and fat storage. When you restrict calories, your blood sugar may drop causing you to get hungry and binge on carbohydrates, which in turn triggers your insulin, the hormone that also promotes fat storage. In essence, for some people, going hungry can promote fat storage rather than fat burning.

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WEEK #4

FATS AND CHOLESTEROL

Fat is a healthy nutrient – if you eat the right kinds and right amounts. Medical problems, such as heart disease, stroke, and diabetes, that have been linked to a fat filled diet are caused by eating too much of the WRONG kinds of fat. Most Americans need to lower the amount of fat in their diet, but in addition to a lower fat diet, they need a right fat diet.

What does fat do in our body?

- 1.) It provides energy.
- 2.) It builds healthy cells.
- 3.) It builds our brain.
- 4.) It helps our body use vitamins specifically vitamins A,D,E,and K.
- 5.) It makes hormones.
- 6.) It provides for healthier skin.
- 7.) It provides a protective cushion for our organs.
- 8.) And what we all know, it makes food taste good!

There are three basic types of fats:

Monounsaturated fats (MUFAs)

Polyunsaturated fats (PUFAs)

Saturated fats (SATFAs)

MUFA's and PUFA's are good fats. SATFA's are bad fats. How do you tell a good fat from a bad fat? A good fat flows like oil. A bad fat just sits there like the fat that marbles a piece of steak. These fats behave similarly in your body. The good fats (MUFA's and PUFA's) flow like oil through your arteries. The bad fats (SATFA's) are like sludge, sticking to your arteries.

Monounsaturated fats are found in such foods as olive oil, canola oil, and nut oils. Polyunsaturated fats are found primarily in vegetable oils and seafood.

Unsaturated fat molecules are curved molecules with negative charges that repel each other so they don't stick together. Saturated fat molecules are flat and they pile up like pages in a book and stick to each other.

MUFA's and PUFA's are liquid at room temperature; SATFA's are solid at room temperature.

An interesting fat fact: your body makes all the saturated fats it needs. You don't have to eat any saturated fats. However, your body can't live without MUFA's and PUFA's.

Essential fatty acids: Fatty acids are the basic building blocks and the main nutritional component of fats. The body requires about 20 fatty acids in order to live and operate. It can make all but two of these: linolenic acid (omega 3s) and linoleic (omega 6s). They are called essential fatty acids because they are essential for life and health and they can only be supplied by food or supplements.

Essential fatty acids:

- 1.) lower the risk of breast and colon cancers
- 2.) improve learning and attention span in schoolchildren
- 3.) improve cognitive function in the elderly.
- 4.) Elevate mood, resulting in less depression
- 5.) Lower the risk of cardiovascular disease
- 6.) Promote healthy skin
- 7.) Improve vision, especially night vision.

Omega 6 fatty acids are found in many oils such as safflower, sunflower, corn and sesame oils.

Omega 3 fatty acids are found in flax seeds, pumpkin seeds, walnuts, wheat germ, eggs, and cold water fish such as salmon and tuna.

Most Western diets contain too much of the omega 6 fatty acids and too little of the omega 3s.

Lipids, Triglycerides, and Cholesterol

Lipid is a chemical name for fat.

Triglycerides are made of three fatty acids plus glycerol. It sounds complicated but all it refers to is ordinary fat. Triglycerides make up 95% of the fat in food and the fat stored in the human body. The other 5% of fats are called phospholipids and cholesterol. The fat on food labels refers to triglycerides. A phospholipid is simply a fat that contains phosphorus. The most common phospholipid that is present in our body and in many of the foods we eat is lecithin, which is one of the important ingredients in sauces, salad dressings, mayonnaise, and in nonstick cooking sprays. Cholesterol is not really a fat, but it combines with fat in the

bloodstream. It contains no calories, so the body cannot derive energy from it. Cholesterol forms an integral part of the cell membranes throughout your body, sort of like the mortar that holds a brick wall together. Only the cell membranes of animal tissue contain cholesterol; plants do not. Cell membranes of plants are composed of fiber, not cholesterol. When you see “no cholesterol” on a package of fruit, vegetables, or grains, the manufacturer has not really done you a favor since there was no cholesterol in these foods to begin with. While cholesterol is essential to life, the body makes all the cholesterol it needs. You can live well eating little or no cholesterol.

Cholesterol enters the body from saturated fats in foods from animal sources. This cholesterol goes to the liver, where it joins the cholesterol that is made there. Cholesterol is transported from the liver to the cells by LDLs (low density lipoproteins). When the cells have enough cholesterol, the remaining amount is deposited in the walls of the arteries where it forms atherosclerotic plaques. HDL (high density lipoproteins) the good cholesterol travels through the bloodstream and picks up excess cholesterol and takes it back to the liver where it is converted into bile which is eliminated in the intestines.

As a general guide, children shouldn't eat more than 100 milligrams of cholesterol per 1000 calories in their diet. So, if you are eating 1800 calories a day you should not take in more than 180 milligrams of cholesterol. For point of reference, a Big Mac has 103 mg of cholesterol, a whopper has 90 mg and a double whopper with cheese has 195 mg.

Hydrogenated Fats: When a food plant takes an unsaturated fat and turns it into a saturated fat. This hydrogenation process is how vegetable oil is turned into margarine. Hydrogenated fats have two major economic advantages over natural saturated fats: They are cheaper and they have a longer shelf life.

The worst kind of hydrogenated fat is trans fats or trans fatty acids. This is when the hydrogenation process transports hydrogen atoms across the fat molecule to a new location.

Hydrogenated fats and trans fats act like saturated fats in the body.

Trans fats elevate blood cholesterol levels, raise the level of LDL (bad) cholesterol while reducing the level of HDL (good cholesterol).

OPTIMAL WEIGHT FOR LIFE WEEK #5

Trimming the Family Fat

Ten Tips to Reduce your Dietary Fat.

- 1.) Eat the right amount of fat. For most children and teens, 30% of daily calories from fat is plenty.
- 2.) Eat the right kinds of fat. What kind of fat is as important as the total amount of fat. Two thirds of the fats eaten daily should be unsaturated fat, and one third or less should be saturated fat. Remember, since our body makes all the saturated fat it needs, it's not necessary to eat ANY saturated fats.
- 3.) Avoid hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated fats. Hydrogenated fats act like saturated fats in your body. Hydrogenated fats have been shown to lower your good cholesterol (HDL), raise your bad cholesterol (LDL), raise harmful fats in the bloodstream and generally raise the risk of cardiovascular disease.
- 4.) Emphasize fats from plants rather than from land animal sources. Fats derived from plants contain more essential fatty acids and are predominantly unsaturated fats.
- 5.) Use low-fat or nonfat alternatives, especially in dairy products.
- 6.) Choose leaner cuts of meat and poultry. Trim the skin off the poultry before cooking. Choose white meat over dark meat, which contains more than twice as much fat as white meat. Turkey meat is lower in fat than chicken.
- 7.) Use lower fat toppings.
- 8.) Shun fast food restaurants.
- 9.) Try alternatives to frying.
- 10.) Exercise. Aerobic exercise raises the level of good cholesterol (HDL) and may also reduce the levels of bad cholesterol (LDL). The only two ways you can raise your HDLs are by exercising and by reducing your body fat.

Sixteen ways to help your child stay lean

- 1.) Monitor snacks. Children get a large percentage of their calories from between meal snacks, so encourage them to snack on nutrient dense, low fat foods.
- 2.) Avoid the clean plate syndrome. It's okay to stop eating when you feel full. It's not necessary to clean the plate.
- 3.) Discourage boredom eating. Children often turn to the refrigerator for satisfaction when what they really are craving is something to do and someone to do it with. Discourage your child from eating alone in front of the TV set. Only eat at the table.
- 4.) Encourage impulse control and delayed gratification. Help your child learn to say no to that second scoop of ice cream or extra piece of cake.
- 5.) Trim TV watching. Today's preschool and school age children watch an average of 25 to 35 hours of TV a week. This contributes to obesity for two reasons: lack of fat burning exercise and a slowed metabolic rate associated with TV watching.
- 6.) Model good eating habits. As you eat, so your child eats. If your child sees you overindulge, he most likely will overindulge too.
- 7.) Send your child off to school with a good nutritional start. Studies show that breakfast skippers tend to overeat the rest of the day
- 8.) No sodas. Soft drinks contain 5 to 10 teaspoons of sugar per serving.
- 9.) Remove overeating cues. Foods that trigger overeating should be hidden or left in the supermarket. Out of sight keeps it out of the stomach.
- 10.) Set realistic goals. Being unrealistic can make it easier to give up.
- 11.) Fill up with fiber. Fiber is calorie free and filling. When you eat foods high in fiber you feel full without consuming a lot of calories. Soluble fibers such as psyllium, pectin, citrus fruits, legumes and oat bran are the best weight loss boosters. One study showed that an extra five grams of fiber a day (the equivalent of one serving of fiber rich cereal) resulted in a daily decrease in calorie consumption.
- 12.) Drink water. The higher the water content of a food, the more filling it is, and water itself has no calories. Drinking at least eight 8 ounce glasses of water a day is a lean person's best choice in the beverage department.
- 13.) There is no food that cannot occasionally be eaten. It is the quantity that is critical. Total deprivation can lead to binge eating.
- 14.) Don't eat quickly. Chewing slowly allows time to register a feeling of fullness.

- 15.) Don't purchase problem high calorie foods. Shop from a set list to prevent impulse buying.
- 16.) When you do eat out, plan ahead what you are going to order to prevent impulse ordering.

Nutrient Dense Foods

Foods that pack the most nutrition into the smallest number of calories. The opposite of nutrient dense foods are calorie dense foods, those that pack a lot of calories into a small amount of food and leave you craving more.

Nutrient dense foods are more likely to satisfy you, leaving you feeling full while contributing to your body's overall nutritional needs. An interesting study showed that when people were allowed to eat all they wanted but only of nutrient dense foods, they consumed fewer calories than when they were allowed to eat highly refined and processed foods.

Examples of nutrient dense foods include

Fresh fruits instead of juice

Whole grain cereals

Wild rice

Brown rice instead of white rice

Yogurt

Nonfat or low fat milk

Nonfat cottage cheese

Turkey and chicken, white meat

Egg whites

Salmon

Tuna

Shrimp

Sweet potatoes

All vegetables and legumes

Avocados

Soy foods

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Week #6

Carbohydrates and Fiber

Carbohydrates include sugars, starches and fiber. Both sugars and starches are broken down by the body into the simple sugar glucose. Glucose molecules then circulate in the bloodstream, supplying cells with fuel on an as needed basis. Extra glucose is converted into glycogen which is stored in the muscles and the liver. If the body is already storing enough glycogen, glucose gets changed into fat. Your body prefers to burn glucose or glycogen for energy, but when these run out your body will burn fat, the reserve fuel.

Carbohydrates are built of sugar molecules called saccharides. Sugars are considered simple carbohydrates when they contain only one or two saccharides. They are arranged like beads on a necklace.

For example, sucrose or table sugar is made of two saccharides glucose and fructose.

Lactose the sugar found in milk is made of two saccharides glucose and galactose.

Starches and fiber are considered complex carbohydrates because they are made of many saccharides.

Starches, like simple sugars, are broken down into glucose fuel by the body, but it takes longer to digest most starches, so they don't cause blood sugar fluctuations the way simple sugars do.

Fiber cannot be broken down by the human intestines and so it cannot be absorbed into the bloodstream. Since it cannot be absorbed it cannot be used as energy by the body. Thus, fiber is essentially a calorie free food. Fiber in a food slows the digestion of other carbohydrates.

The best source of energy is complex carbohydrates better known as starches. It takes the body a long time to break them down. Complex carbohydrates are like a time released capsule. They provide slow, constant energy. The stomach feels full longer, and the body does not experience the highs and lows of blood sugar swings. Complex carbohydrates are found in grains, vegetables, and legumes – foods that provide vitamins, minerals and

fiber as well as energy. You get a lot of nutritional bang for your buck with complex carbohydrates.

Fruits contain the sugar fructose which is a simple sugar. Fruit sugars provide quick energy but do not excite the blood sugar roller coaster because the fiber in fruits slows the absorption of the sugars. This is why actual fruit is so much better for you than fruit juice. So it is the company the sugar keeps with other nutrients in the food that affects its absorption from the intestines and its consequent behavior in the body.

An important characteristic of sugars and starches is the glycemic index (GI), which is a measure of how quickly a carbohydrate is digested, enters the bloodstream, and raises the blood sugar level. Foods with a low glycemic index enter the bloodstream slowly and trigger the insulin response less quickly, contributing to a steadier blood sugar level. On the other hand, foods with a high glycemic index enter the bloodstream quickly and jolt the insulin response into action, quickly leading to large blood sugar swings.

Here's how different carbohydrates rank from lowest to highest in glycemic index:

1. legumes
2. dairy products
3. vegetables
4. fruits
5. whole grains
6. refined sugars and grains

Fat and fiber slow sugar absorption, so the sugar in ice cream enters the bloodstream more slowly than the sugar in soda. Because of the fiber, the sugar in a whole orange enters the bloodstream more slowly than the sugar in orange juice.

What's increased dramatically in the American diet are the "bad" carbs with a high glycemic index – foods like white bread, refined breakfast cereals and concentrated sugars – that are rapidly digested and raise blood glucose and insulin to high levels, changes that eventually can lead to diabetes. "Good" carbohydrates – foods like whole grains, most fruits, vegetables, nuts, and legumes – have a low glycemic index meaning they release sugar slowly.

One study showed that a high glycemic index meal actually made kids more hungry and caused them to overeat.

The complex carbohydrates found in vegetables, grains and fruits are good for you; the simple sugars found in sodas, candies, frostings, and packaged treats can do harm when eaten in excess.

Excess sugar depresses immunity, worsens behavior, attention and learning, promotes cravings, promotes diabetes, promotes heart disease, and promotes obesity. Even though fat has gotten the reputation as the unhealthy food, excess sugar deserves an equal reputation.

Fiber comes in two forms, insoluble and soluble. Soluble fiber acts like a sponge; insoluble fiber acts like a broom. Soluble fiber is found in dried beans and peas, oat bran, rice bran, barley, and even fruit pectin. Soluble fiber slows the rate of glucose digestion. Insoluble fiber is the stringy stuff that holds plants together. It's called insoluble because it doesn't dissolve in water. It can be found mainly in plant leaves, peels, skins, and the coverings of whole grains.

Fiber curbs overeating. Fibers are filling without being fattening. High fiber foods require more chewing and the prolonged chewing besides predigesting the food, satisfies the appetite, so you eat less. Fiber stays in the stomach longer, absorbs water, swells, and helps you feel full. Best fibers for weight control are bran and the pectin from fruits.

Fiber steadies your blood sugar level. Fiber slows fat absorption. Fiber slows down the absorption of fat from the foods you eat. The stools of people eating high fiber diets have a higher fat content than stools from those eating low fiber meals.

Fiber reduces cholesterol. Fiber lowers the level of the harmful type of cholesterol (LDL) without lowering the good cholesterol (HDL). Recent studies show that eating an extra 10 grams of fiber daily decreases the risk of dying from heart disease by 17 to 29 per cent. Children should eat their age plus 5 in grams of fiber daily. Thus, a ten year old should eat ten plus five or 15 grams of fiber daily.

Fiber promotes regularity and fiber reduces cancer risk. Soluble fiber protects you from cardiovascular disease and insoluble fiber protects you from colon cancer.

The skins of fruit are rich sources of fiber, so don't peel apples and pears. Bran, beans and berries are good sources of fiber.

Optimal Weight for Life, L.L.C.

Week #:

Good Grains, Fabulous Fruits, and Valuable Vegetables

Grains

Around 2/3 of the calories in grains come from complex carbohydrates. Grains are also a rich source of protein. In most cultures, except our beef eating Western society, most of the protein in people's diets come directly from grains. (In our culture, it's the cattle that get their protein from grains.) Grains are also naturally low in fat.

In comparing bread ingredient labels, the shorter the ingredients list, the better the bread. The key word on the bread label is "whole". Be careful of labels that say wheat flour which does not mean the same as whole wheat. Wheat flour, which gives bread a light brown color and therefore more health appeal is 75% white flour and only 25% whole wheat. A marketing gimmick is to add coloring to bread to make it brown and appear healthy when it is not. Make sure the first ingredient on the back is whole wheat.

Best breads are 100% whole grain. Whole wheat flour is the first ingredient on the label. Downright junk breads list "bleached, enriched flour" first in the ingredients list.

Weigh your bread. As a general guide, the heavier the bread the more nutrition it contains. When shopping, compare breads by holding a loaf in each hand. The loaf that weighs more is more loaded with nutrients. Bread made with whole wheat flour is naturally heavier, firmer, and more nutrient dense than airy white bread.

Rice enjoys a popularity similar to that of wheat. In Asia, it's the main grain. It is much less nutrient dense than wheat but it's claim to fame is that it contains the most carbohydrates, which makes it a popular energy food in many cultures. White rice belongs in the same nutritional category as white bread. Brown rice is more nutritious than white rice and wild rice is more nutritious than brown rice. For the nutrition minded person, wild rice is really the healthiest form of rice.

Whole grains keep longer and stay fresher if kept in tightly closed containers, such as plastic bags, and in cold places. They keep longest in the refrigerator.

The only thing better than whole grain or whole wheat is multi whole – grain. Packing many grains together into one food will give you the benefit of many different nutrients.

Enriched on the flour label means the thiamin, riboflavin, niacin and iron lost during processing have been put back in, but manufacturers are not required to replace any other vitamins or minerals. So, you get less nutritional benefit from enriched products than from the unrefined originals.

Six criteria for a healthy cereal:

- 1.) The grains should be whole.
- 2.) Protein content should be at least 3 grams per serving
- 3.) Five and five rule: less than five grams of sugar and at least 5 grams of fiber
- 4.) Zinc content should be 25 to 40 per cent of the recommended dietary amount (RDA).
- 5.) Iron content should be 25 to 40 per cent of the RDA.
- 6.) Other vitamin and mineral content should be 25 to 40 percent of the RDA.

A nutritious cereal should not have hydrogenated oils, dyes or artificial colors, chemical preservatives.

FRUIT

Our food preferences are based on taste, not nutrition, which is why fruit is such a great food. Fruits taste sweet and interesting. They have agreeable textures, and most fruits are surprisingly nutritious. Though not as nutrient dense as vegetables, fruits are an important source of vitamins, minerals, and enzymes.

Much of the fiber in fruit is in the skin. So, eat the fruit whole with the skin.

Eating the whole fruit is better than drinking the juice of the fruit, especially if you are watching your weight. A cup of apple juice contains around 115 calories with minimum nutrition, while a medium sized apple has only 80

calories, with a lot more nutrition. With the whole fruit you get the filling effect of fiber, so you tend to eat less. Juice goes down quickly, so you tend to want more.

Colorful berries (blueberries and blackberries) are full of phytonutrients, which contain powerful antioxidants called anthocyanins and other cancer fighters. Blueberries have the highest antioxidant capacity of all fruits, mainly because of the high level of anthocyanins in their skin.

VEGETABLES

While you don't have to become a strict vegetarian, one of the healthiest eating habits you can foster in your family is to make vegetables the centerpiece of your meals and let the other food groups accompany them. The animal food is more of a garnish adding flavor and nutrition to a medley of vegetables and grains. A stir fry is a good example. If you aren't ready to relegate steak and meatloaf to second place, at least make vegetables equal stars in the meal.

Seven reasons why veggies are so good for you:

- 1.) Vegetables are nutrient dense. Vegetables pack a lot of nutrition into a minimum of calories. For a measly 35 calories, you can get a half cup of vegetables that contains a wide variety of vitamins, minerals, and health-building substances called phytonutrients.
- 2.) Vegetables are a dieter's best partner. Vegetables get top billing on any fat control diet because most are free foods meaning you can eat an unlimited amount without having to count the calories. The body uses almost as many calories to digest vegetables as there are in vegetables in the first place. You'll use up most of the 26 calories in a tomato just by chewing, swallowing, and digesting it.
- 3.) You can fill up for less. Because of the fiber in vegetables, you get fuller faster, which is another reason it is nearly impossible to overeat veggies.
- 4.) Vegetables are fat free and cholesterol free. Over 95% of vegetables contain less than 1 gram of fat per serving and even that insignificant gram is mostly unsaturated fats.
- 5.) Variety. There are dozens of kinds of vegetables and many more ways to prepare them.

- 6.) Vegetables provide complex carbohydrates. These take some time to digest and don't cause the blood sugar highs and lows that sugars do.
- 7.) Vegetables contain cancer fighting phyto. Vegetables contain phytochemicals that are nature's way of preventing cancer.

Tomatoes. The very nutrient that makes tomatoes red – lycopene – is also a top antioxidant. Even though beta carotene gets all the press as a health food, the most powerful cancer fighting carotenoid is really lycopene. Lycopene delivers twice the antioxidant power of Vitamin E. Lycopene can also be found in guava, watermelon, and pink grapefruit.

Anti – Cancer Vegetables

Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, eggplant, green beans, kale, onions (red), peppers, radishes, soy, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, yams.

Anti – Cancer Fruits

Apricots, blueberries, grapefruit, grapes, lemons, mangoes, oranges, papayas, peaches, persimmons, strawberries (organic), tangerines.

OPTIMAL WEIGHT FOR LIFE WEEK 8

PROTEINS

Protein is a reasonably worry-free food. Unlike with fat or sugar, it's nearly impossible to overdose on proteins, especially in children's diets. And for most Americans getting enough protein is not a problem. Also, unlike with fats and carbs, there's no such food as an unhealthy protein. What is unhealthy however is the fat and/or sugar that comes with the protein in the foods that you eat.

Like fats and carbohydrates, proteins contain carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, but proteins contain one more element that sets them apart from fats and carbohydrates. That element is nitrogen.

Proteins are made up of molecules known as amino acids. There are twenty amino acids and these amino acids can be combined like letters to make words or in this case proteins. Just as there are millions of words out there, there are also millions of proteins.

There are two kinds of amino acids: essential and nonessential amino acids. Eleven of the twenty amino acids are nonessential which means your body can make them and you do not need to eat them. Nine of the twenty amino acids are essential which means your body cannot make them and so it is essential that you eat them in your diet.

There are also two kinds of proteins: complete proteins and incomplete proteins. A complete protein contains all nine essential amino acids. A protein missing one or more of the essential amino acids is called an incomplete protein.

Animal proteins, like meat, are complete proteins. Plant proteins are incomplete proteins. Soy is the only plant protein that is a complete protein. However, not to worry, you can combine different plant proteins to make a complete protein. Whole wheat bread and peanut butter make a complete protein. Cereal and milk make a complete protein. Pizza and cheese make a complete protein.

The problem with land animal proteins is that they carry animal fats – saturated fats – with them. Because of their lower fat content, fish and plant proteins are usually healthier choices.

The amount of protein you need depends primarily on the size of your body and how fast it is growing, and, to a lesser extent, on your gender and how much you exercise. On average, for the people in this program your minimum daily protein needs are between 28 – 75 grams.

It is generally unwise to use a high-protein diet to lose weight. The protein overdose sends the kidneys into overtime. As the kidneys work to eliminate the excess protein, they also dump a lot of water out of your system. On the bathroom scale, this looks like a dramatic weight loss, but it is not a real weight loss.

Substituting fish for meat is one of the best dietary changes you can make for your family. Fish is a nutrient dense source of protein. Most varieties contain around 20 grams of protein per 3 ounce serving, the same as meat.

The colder the water, the more nutritious and safer the fish. Cold-water fish such as salmon and tuna contain more of the omega 3 fatty acids DHA and EPA than fish from warmer waters such as catfish, red snapper, and trout. As a general guide, the warmer the water, the lower the oil content of the fish. Ocean fish tend to be safer to eat than fresh-water fish, which are more likely to contain traces of environmental pollutants.

Beef is high in fat and unlike milk, in which you can separate out part or all of the fat, you can never get rid of all the fat in beef, no matter how well you trim it. Even the lean parts are laced with fat. Extra-lean select grade beef contains around 7 percent fat. Not only is there too much fat in beef, but nearly half the fat in beef is the artery clogging saturated type. Beef is also high in cholesterol. Beef is high in fat and it contains no fiber, so it takes longer to empty from the stomach and pass through the intestines.

When reading labels on cuts of meat, select is the leanest cut of meat. Choice contains 15 to 35 percent fat by weight and prime is the fattest grade, containing 35 to 45 percent fat by weight.

Fat content will vary with different cuts of meat, as well as with the grade. Here are different cuts of select-grade beef in order from lowest fat content to highest.

- 1.) Top round
- 2.) Eye of round
- 3.) Round tip
- 4.) Bottom round
- 5.) Shank
- 6.) Sirloin
- 7.) Arm
- 8.) Top loin
- 9.) T-bone
- 10.) Tenderloin
- 11.) Porterhouse
- 12.) Brisket
- 13.) Rib-eye
- 14.) Flank
- 15.) Ribs
- 16.) Blade

Poultry holds the middle ground in the eating-of-animal-flesh debate. It's better for you than beef but not as good for you as seafood. It's easier to lower the fat level in chicken or turkey than it is in beef. To get less saturated fat from your bird, remove the skin, since most of the fat is found here rather than marbled through the bird's muscle. Removing the skin from the poultry reduces the calories by at least 20 percent and the fat by 40 to 50 percent. Choose white meat over dark meat as white meat is lower in fat. Dark meat is 25 percent higher in calories and more than twice as high in fat. Turkey is around 20 percent lower in calories and 75 percent lower in fat. 3 1/2 ounces of turkey breast contain a paltry 1 gram of fat.

OPTIMAL WEIGHT FOR LIFE
WEEK #9

VITAMINS AND MINERALS

Calcium:

Calcium promotes healthy bones. The stronger the bone development during childhood, the healthier those bones will be in the adult.

Calcium helps muscles. Muscles can cramp, and in the case of heart muscles even fail, if they are not supplied with just the right amount of calcium. Nerve impulses, the transmission of information between nerve fibers, will not function properly without just the right amount of calcium. Calcium is one of the most vital minerals for optimal functioning of your entire body.

Daily requirements in milligrams of elemental calcium:

Children 1 to 10: 800 mg daily

Preteens and teens: 1,200 to 1,500 mg daily

Adults: 1,200 mg daily

Your intestines regulate calcium entry. Children can absorb around 75 % of the calcium from their diet, whereas adults may absorb as little as 15%. If you eat too much calcium or already have enough calcium in your blood, the intestines simply absorb less of the calcium in the food you eat. If your body needs calcium, the intestines absorb more. Bones are the second regulator. If you don't get enough calcium in your diet, your body may borrow what it needs from your bones. A hormone called "parathyroid" oversees all this calcium activity keeping the calcium concentrations just right.

Stress from tension and worry can decrease calcium absorption. The calcium in the diet is excreted rather than used.

Labels on calcium supplements can be misleading. The figure that is important is the amount of elemental calcium provided by the supplement. This is the actual amount of useable calcium.

Calcium is best absorbed when taken in smaller amounts more frequently and with meals. For example, your body absorbs more calcium if you take one 250 mg tablet twice a day rather than one 500 mg tablet once a day. -

Dairy products are a rich source of calcium, and lactose, the sugar contained in milk, facilitates calcium absorption. However, chocolate milk is not such a good source of calcium because chocolate interferes with calcium absorption.

Soft drinks that contain citric or phosphoric acid can decrease the absorption of calcium. A 12 ounce cola can rob the body of 100 milligrams of calcium.

Vitamin C improves the absorption of calcium.

The presence of estrogen facilitates calcium absorption, so women after menopause are at an increased risk of calcium deficiency and therefore need to increase their daily intake of calcium.

Couch potatoism or lack of exercise may contribute as much or more to osteoporosis than a lack of calcium does. Weight bearing exercise (anything except swimming and cycling) not only builds muscle it builds bone.

Best sources of calcium

Yogurt, nonfat, plain, one cup	450 mg
Yogurt, nonfat, fruit, one cup	300 mg
Milk, lowfat, one cup	300 mg
Orange juice, calcium fortified 1 cup	300 mg
Broccoli ½ cup	47 mg
Almonds 1 ounce	82 mg
Cereal, calcium fortified ½ cup	100 – 200 mg
Spinach ½ cup	136 mg
Orange 1 medium	50 mg
Parmesan cheese 1 ounce	336 mg

IRON

Iron is necessary to make hemoglobin, the substance that carries oxygen through your blood to all the cells in your body. Hemoglobin is what makes red blood cells red. With insufficient iron, red blood cells become small and pale and don't carry enough oxygen. You may have heard the expression of tired blood. This refers to blood that is low in iron and that can't carry enough oxygen to vital organs and muscles. Iron is needed not only for

blood but also for brains. Neurotransmitters, the neurochemicals that carry messages from one nerve to another, require sufficient iron to function properly. A person with an iron deficiency may have a tired mind as well as a tired body.

There are two types of iron: Animal iron or "heme iron" and plant iron or "non-heme iron". Animal iron is better absorbed by the body than plant iron. 15 to 35% of animal iron is absorbed while 2-20% of plant iron is absorbed by the body.

Vitamin C can double the amount of iron absorbed from a food. Meat, poultry and fish also enhance the absorption of iron from plant sources.

Daily iron requirements

Children 1 to 10 years	10 mg
Teen males	12 mg
Adult males	10 mg
Teen and adult females	18 mg
Pregnant women	30 mg

Eat the skin on your potatoes. The skin contains 5 times the amount of iron as the whole rest of the potato.

Beef (4 ounces)	3.5 mg
Chicken (white meat, 4 ounces)	1 mg
Turkey (white meat, 4 ounces)	1.6 mg
Beans (1/2 cup)	2 mg
Potato with skin	2.5 mg
Tomato sauce (4 ounces)	.8 mg
Breakfast Cereal (iron fortified)	4-8 mg
Peas (4 ounces)	1 mg
Chili with meat and beans(1cup)	4 mg
Chickpeas (1/2 cup)	2 mg

VALUE YOUR VITAMINS

In the early 1900's these nutrients in foods were thought to be amines, or organic compounds. Since they are vital to life, they were termed "vit - amines". Unlike the Big Three nutrients (fats, proteins, and carbohydrates),

vitamins contain no calories and are not sources of energy, yet they work at the cellular level to help metabolize the nutrients from food.

There are thirteen vitamins that are essential to humans. Fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K) are absorbed with the help of fats in the diet and are stored in the fats of the body. Because your body can store these vitamins for a long time, unless your diet is chronically lacking one of these it is unusual to have a deficiency of a fat soluble vitamin. The other vitamins – vitamin C and the B-complex vitamins – are water soluble vitamins, meaning, they do not need fat for absorption, and they are not stored very long in the body. If there's an excess of water soluble vitamins, either from food or from a supplement, they are flushed through the body rapidly and are eliminated quickly in the urine.

Except for vitamin D, and a bit of vitamin K, your body cannot make vitamins. You must get them from foods.

It's better to get your vitamins from foods and not from supplements, since one nutrient in a food may help another one be better absorbed. Except for vitamin A, it's impossible to overdose on vitamins in food and to overdose on vitamin A you would have to eat a lot of carrots or a modest amount of polar bear liver.

OPTIMAL WEIGHT FOR LIFE WEEK NUMBER 10

EATING OUT

Americans eat out more than four times a week on average. In the late 1970's, fast food sales amounted to about 9 billion dollars annually in the U.S. In 2002 that figure was projected at about 115 billion.

No matter where you choose to eat, the same smart eating strategies can guide your eating:

- 1.) plan ahead
- 2.) consider the menu
- 3.) choose foods carefully to match your needs

Fast food pointers

Watch your portions. Never "biggie size". Consider getting the kids meal. Even if you are not a kid. Bigger portions mean more calories and likely more fat, cholesterol, and sodium.

Think before you buy. Order takers often promote with marketing questions – for example, "Would you like fries with that?" or "Do you want the value size?" It's o.k. to say "NO!"

Go easy on the sides. A large order of fries and a large soft drink can add 650 calories to your meal.

Split your order. Share your order with a family member or friend and halve the calories.

On sandwiches and salads, go easy on condiments special sauces and dressings. Just one packet of mayonnaise (about 1 tablespoon) adds about 60 calories and 5 fat grams. The same size packet of tartar sauce has about 70 calories and 8 grams of fat. A 1 1/2 ounce packet of French dressing contains 185 calories and 17 fat grams. Instead ask for mustard, ketchup, salsa and always get your dressings on the side.

Avoid fried foods.

Avoid fast food breakfasts. Fast food menus offer fewer options for breakfast than for lunch and dinner. Many of the choices are high in calories, fat, cholesterol, and salt.

For example, a typical bacon, egg, and cheese biscuit sandwich has about 475 calories, 30 fat grams, and 1260 milligrams of sodium..

Skip the super-size sandwich; go for the regular, junior or single size instead. The bigger size can about double everything, including the calorie, fat and sodium content. A large hamburger, for example, supplies about 510 calories and 28 fat grams compared with 275 calories and 12 fat grams in a regular hamburger. A regular burger has about 2 ounces of cooked meat, compared with 3 to 4 ounces in a larger sandwich.

If you have to have fried chicken, order the regular variety and not “extra crispy” which soaks up more oil when cooked.

PIZZA

For more fiber, build your pizza on a whole wheat crust. To trim the calories order a thin crust pizza rather than a thick crust or deep dish pizza. A stuffed-crust pizza can have considerably more calories and fat than a thinner crust pizza; for example, 1 slice of a large stuffed-crust pizza may have 20 fat grams or more, and 450 calories or more.

Load up on vegetable and fruit toppings for less fat, more fiber and more vitamins.

Go easy on higher fat toppings: bacon, pepperoni, prosciutto, sausage, olives, anchovies, and extra cheese. As far as meats go, Canadian bacon is a leaner choice.

Supermarket psychology

Keep a shopping list and stick to it. With a list you're less likely to spend money on items you really don't need. Be aware that “limit” signs (limit three per customer) and messages such as two for five dollars are marketing ploys to get consumers to buy more. Research shows they work!

Only clip coupons for items you really need.

Try not to shop when you're hungry. You'll less likely succumb to impulse items, including more expensive and less nutritious snack and dessert foods. Take advantage of seasonal produce. In season, the price for fresh fruit and vegetables may be lower, and the produce more flavorful.

When you fall off of the wagon, as we all do from time to time, start back with the 5-2-1-0 plan.

Focus on eating 5 servings of fruits and vegetable daily. The food guide pyramid recommends eating 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Fruits and vegetables are nutrient dense foods. They contain a lot of nutrients and fill you up without a lot of calories.

Focus on limiting your screen time (referring to TV, computer, and video games) to no more than two hours daily. If you are sitting around watching TV or playing on the computer you are not moving and moving is important to get your metabolism up and to burn calories.

Focus on exercising 1 hour daily. This becomes easier if you spend less time watching TV. When you get home from school ride your bike, do push ups, situps, walk with your parents after dinner or in the morning before school. Remember those who need to exercise the most benefit the most from the exercise.

Focus on 0 sugar sweetened beverages daily. This means no cokes, sweet tea, Gatorade, Powerade, lemonade, juices. Beverages don't fill you up. So, beverages with calories just add on top of all the calories you consume from foods.