

Our Healthy Lifestyles

Making the move to healthier family eating habits

Introducing healthier food choices and vowing to increase the family's consumption of vegetables and fruits may be met with wrinkled noses and less-than-enthusiastic commentary, from kids and adult family members alike. It's tough to make dramatic changes overnight. However with a commitment to trial, transition and a few tricks, families are able to adopt healthier habits.

Both the eating and activity habits we develop as children have a strong impact on our lifelong health and well-being, so it's critical to establish healthy behaviors early on. Whether we grew up with healthy habits or not, it's our obligation as grown-ups to ensure kids



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have a strong foundation.

The Southington-Cheshire Community YMCA offers helpful tips to encourage families to make the transition to more healthful eating habits:

Try, Try, Repeat – There are many great tast-

ing fruits and vegetables that many kids have never heard of, let alone tried. Grab a new fruit or vegetable and encourage everyone in the family to try at least a bite.

Sometimes it takes two or three times in order to develop a like or dislike. Include kids in identifying, learning about and shopping for new items. Weekend farmers' markets and produce sales can be great opportunities to discover new and interesting varieties. Grown-ups, remember it may take up to 10 trials before family members will gladly add a vegetable or fruit to a meal.

Be a Role Model – Actions of older family members will influence how kids react to foods.

The more kids hear "I love salad" or "carrots are my favorite" the more they'll think positively. Similarly, if a grown-up refuses anything green, kids may start passing on the broccoli, too.

Transition in Steps – If the family is used to whole milk, introduce 2 percent, then 1 percent (depending on ages of young children) and then skim. Start transitioning to more healthful ingredients like trying ground turkey/chicken in place of ground beef.

Makeover Family Recipes – Get the whole family involved in creating "new and improved" family favorites. Instead of packaged mac and cheese, try making a healthier version with

whole grain pasta, real cheese and – for an extra boost – add some pureed cauliflower. Skip delivery and let everyone make their own pizza with whole wheat crust and a variety of veggie toppings and a lean protein.

Offer Choices – Choices give kids and grown-ups an opportunity to exercise power and have opinions. Offer a couple of fresh fruit options to choose from at breakfast, choice of veggies and fruits for lunch boxes and after school snacks. Mix a variety of favorites and new options so it allows everyone to make a healthier choice.

Negotiate Rather than Dictate – Getting the family involved in finding healthy recipes to try, help-

ing prepare new things, reading labels and doing projects like starting a healthy family recipe book gives everyone a voice and a part in decision making instead of being forced to eat differently.

It's all about small steps in the right direction. Making gradual changes, introducing new foods and adapting to new tastes week by week can result in major change in the course of a year and ultimately a lifetime.

For more information on implementing a healthy lifestyle contact Karen DiGirolamo, YMCA Health & Wellness Director at www.kdigiro-lamo@southington-cheshireymca.org or 860-426-9529.

Some tips and tricks to help you on your weight loss journey

You may already know that I have a great weight loss program in my office. It works well because I am the client's health coach. They see me weekly and we talk about their challenges and how to get through them. I want to share some of the things we talk about and discuss how to avoid these pitfalls and be successful in your weight loss program.

The first thing, and to me the most important, is to eat breakfast. I know, I hear it all the time, "I'm not hungry in the morning." Don't care. If you want to lose weight, you must eat breakfast.

The only way to lose weight is to rev up your



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metabolism. Breaking your fast that you did for the eight hours you were sleeping (get it, Breakfast...break fast), gets the metabolism kick started and turns on the fat burning.

A bowl of oatmeal, some blueberries and slivered almonds is a great breakfast with all the food groups you need. Avoid the donut and coffee. No nutritional value and simple carbohydrates will increase your blood sugar causing you to release insulin. The insulin converts the sugar to fat and that makes you fat.

As Americans, we love our holidays, and holidays equal parties and parties equal a lot of food. This is tough when you are on a calorie restricted program

to get into fat burning and lose weight fast. So my clients and I discuss this challenge a lot. And I frequently try to change their mindset. What is more important in these gatherings, the food or the people? Of course the answer is always the people so be with them in other rooms and not in the room where all the food is. If alcohol is present and you want to avoid it, yet still "fit in", have a club soda with a lime and a stirrer which looks like an alcoholic drink. If you have to have some wine, make a spritzer instead. Less wine means fewer calories.

And remember it is only one day, so if you goof

up, it is not a deal breaker. Just do some extra exercising to burn those extra calories.

Wow, I just heard a very loud groan when I mentioned the exercise word. Sorry. The next important principle in weight loss is the evil exercise. To lose weight, it is calories in less than calories out.

Exercising increases the calories out so you can have more calories in. And the best exercise for calories out would be weights. Especially, if you can do the weights in an aerobic way.

Building muscle is the goal. The more muscle, the faster your metabolism and the more fat you will burn.

Remember that muscle may weigh more than fat, but it takes up less space and looks a lot better. Walking is good but you can walk for a half hour and only burn 100 calories. That is not going to counter that cheese burger you had last night.

I hope these tips will help you in your goal to get healthier. If you would like more information, visit my weight loss website at www.drCarolGrant.tsfl.com.

Dr. Carol Grant, a local chiropractor, does not intend this column to substitute for medical advice. She urges you to always consult with your personal physician before changing any current program.

What's taking so long with the QRWA headquarters building?

One of the most pressing goals of the QRWA is rehabbing their headquarters located at 540 Oregon Road in Meriden, where the Quinnipiac River flows into Hanover Pond and then it continues on to Long Island Sound.

Life Along the Q River

The Quinnipiac watershed area encompasses the towns of New Britain, Plainville, Wolcott, Prospect, Southington, Cheshire, Meriden, Middletown, Middlefield, Wallingford, Hamden, North Branford, North Haven and New Haven.

The building will become a regional environmental, educational and recreational center

and will also serve as headquarters for the organization. One of the main features of the building will include a science lab/classroom for after school programs and educational lectures and projects as well as a community room, office space and a front lobby for displaying photos and history of the organization and building.

The building now has a completed boat house to store canoes and kayaks.

This has been an ongoing all volunteer effort and the primary focus of the board for the past five years. The process has been challenged by weather conditions, broken promises, and lack of materials.

While a major portion of building materials have been provided by grant funding made possible

from the Cuno Foundation the organization remains in need of duct work to connect a furnace, plumbing to prepare for bathroom facilities, and materials for frame work and completion of the insulation to get the building habitable.

One of the challenges in working with a brick building is the constant replacement of old bricks for both the exterior and interior of the building and every cut out for a door or window requires masonry talents. The work that has been completed to date includes a layer of spray-on insulation to the entire interior of the building both on the first and second floor; plugging up gaps and crevices to eliminate drafts and to create a smooth working surface. Lead flashing was installed along the

roofline to prevent moisture for seeping into the building. Gutters and downspouts were installed as well as the fascia along the side of the building to complete the roofing.

Twenty-four new thermo pain windows were installed and added greatly to the overall appearance of the building and are rated energy star having two sheets of glass with an air pocket for thermal insulation. The front of the building has been pitched and graded to ensure water is directed away from the building and in ready to finish with groundcover. A trench has been devise to carry water directly to a drain-pipe.

The front door that is the entrance to the boat house and the back entrance doors are new and will be painted

Hunter Green to match the rain barrels. Where the old furnace resided two interior doors have been cut and framed that lead to the ADA compliant bathroom facilities.

The side window of the boathouse has been cut out and replaced with frosted glass blocks to give the room diffused light without exposing the contents of the room. A clay tile floor has been added for durability and water traffic when bringing in the boats for storage. The room now has racks to store canoes and kayaks with additional racks to hold life jackets and paddles. An outer brick wall was cut to accommodate an overhead door that opens facing the shores of Hanover Pond for easy launching.

There is still much inside work to be done including but limited to:

sealing the windows, installing lead flashing on the roof, septic pipe plumbing through a concrete floor, installing plumbing bathroom fixtures, installing the mental wall studs, wiring the building and installing exterior security lighting.

Once that is accomplished, the walls will need sheet rock and tape, install the interior doors, trim the windows, doors and floors, and the furnace with related duct-work, and drop in the suspended ceiling, and install insulation in the attic space.

With another winter soon approaching and no heat in the building the organization will be faced with delays on work to the interior of the building. While QRWA may be leasing the building from the