

Targeting Wellness Newsletter

Good News for Good Health!

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Debby Schiffer, Wellness Director for BURLCO & TRICO JIFs

March is National Nutrition Month. And with the anticipation of warmer weather, after being cooped up inside all winter, not to mention the social distancing that is still in place, the thought of getting outside for some fun in the sun, is invigorating!

That thought may also create a bit of uneasiness with the realization of possibly having to shed a few pounds before getting back into those summer clothes.

Nutrition plays a huge role in our ability to participate not only in those outdoor activities with family and friends, but life! In this issue of *Targeting Wellness Newsletter*, I want to touch on ways you can take back control plus one other important facade that contributes to overall health, sleep!

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The Challenge Of Weight Loss

As the days continue to get longer, the temperature starts to get warmer and we begin to anticipate a lifting of some of the social distancing restrictions caused by this pandemic, many of you might be starting to think about ramping up your efforts to lose the extra winter pounds you might have gained (on top of the “quarantine 15”). What have you done in the past to lose weight? Perhaps you tried one of the many diet options. Perhaps you increased your exercise routine or started counting calories, cut portion sizes and reduced calorie intake. All good ideas but did they work on their own for the long-haul? Probably not, especially if we have to consider trying one of them again.

May I suggest a slightly different approach? What about starting by first looking at your current habits and lifestyle. Really take a look at what changes you need to make in order to succeed. Look at how your current lifestyle as it pertains to the following four areas: habits, comfort, fear and reinforcement.



1 Habits—they can be a way of saving time and energy. You don’t have to think about how to brush your teeth, you just do it. But as we know, some habits have a negative health consequence. They can become so ingrained, that even when we decide to change them, the process is not easy.

2 Comfort—many times we make choices simply because it gives us comfort. That richly marbled steak, a cold beer, a Lazy Boy lounge and the remote control. There is nothing wrong with comfort, many people really should seek more of it in their self-denying lives—balance is key. But sometimes our habitual need for comfort gets us stuck in a very unhealthy lifestyle.

3 Fear—making a change can be fear inducing for sure. It creates a sense of loss. Even if it’s a positive change, like quitting smoking or eliminating excess sugar from your diet, we have to let go of something...taking us right out of our comfort zone. Studies show that people will reduce their options and choices in order to remain feeling “safe”. Perhaps you tried before and the process was painful. Why try again? Totally understandable. This discouragement feeds the fear and many times our environment does not support us. We can fear failure but we can also fear success, especially if those around you are not on the same page as you. Which leads me to...

4 Reinforcement—It’s tough being the only one who brings a bagged lunch on your shift when everyone else takes a break together at the local fast food restaurant. Or coming home after a tiring day to be faced with a hungry family. It would make it much easier to pick up that pizza on your drive home instead of being faced with trying to prepare a healthy meal. Check out “Meal Planning for Your Health” on page 5 of this issue.



Sleep Can Affect Weight

Sleep Deprivation Can Lead To Weight Gain

This should not come as a surprise. Think about when you are short on sleep, you may grab for that sugary food to “give you energy”. You may skip your workout because you’re “too tired” and you may opt for takeout at dinner because you “just don’t feel like cooking”. Some consequences of being short on sleep include:

- ★ Interference with your ability to make clear rationale decisions, leading to more impulse responses
- ★ Revving up of the brain’s reward center reducing ones ability to ignore cravings
- ★ Prompting you to eat bigger portions (of those higher calorie dense foods!)
- ★ Disrupts the appetite hormones (i.e. ghrelin, our hunger hormone, is increased and leptin, our indicator of fullness, is decreased)
- ★ Stress hormone, cortisol, stays elevated throughout the day. Typically it is highest in the morning to wake us up but decreases in the afternoon allowing serotonin to crank up melatonin production. Sleep deprivation can impair this natural cycle.

When you eat can affect circadian rhythm

We have been hearing a lot more about intermittent fasting. Fasting for health and religious reason has been practiced for centuries. More and more studies have been coming out which shows that intermittent fasting or time-restricted eating may actually have beneficial affects on our overall well-being and life span.

Turns out the times we eat may be as important as what we choose to eat. It can actually affect our circadian rhythm in many ways. One study done on mice showed where those on an unrestricted eating time gained weight rapidly compared to the mice placed on an intermittent fasting diet even though both groups ate the same amount of calories and fats.

Sleep is a time of restoration, a period of time when our body and brain can rejuvenate, It’s during sleep when toxins, built up during the day, are removed from our brain. It affects every part of our body, our heart, lungs, our immune function, our mood, and disease resistance. Research shows that a chronic lack of sleep or getting poor quality sleep, increases the risk of developing certain disorders such as high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity. Eating late at night can disrupt this necessary recovery time.

I’m sure you have heard recommendations to abstain from eating food, especially a heavy meal, at LEAST 3 hours before going to sleep. That is so our brain and body can focus on the restorative activities rather than the digestion of food.

Intermittent fasting has shown to activate the genes that govern circadian rhythm; in other words, we are primed to sleep better during the night and be more alert during the day. Having a healthy circadian rhythm is vital for overall health. An eating window of between 8-10 hours is considered optimal in humans, which means 14-16 hours of not eating—giving our body time to focus on other things. But in today’s modern world and the demands of shift work, this can be a huge challenge. PLUS keep in mind that during the “feeding time”, it’s important that we make the best food selections as possible. Please refer to the calorie density principle mentioned in this issue.

Intermittent Fasting Defined

- 8-10 hour eating window (16-14 hour of fasting) is doable for most people
- Try not to eat 2-3 hrs before bedtime
 - ★ During this time, melatonin begins to rise which can slow down the function of the pancreas so the pancreas does not produce enough insulin
 - ★ Eating dinner too late stresses our stomach, intestines etc.
 - ★ Better to have an early dinner
- Having a larger meal in the first half of the day is a good thing

Benefits of Intermittent Fasting (IF)

- IF has a number of benefits in the treatment of chronic health conditions like diabetes, obesity, digestive issues, heart disease, mental health, etc.
- People tend to inadvertently reduce their alcohol and sugar intake
- Optimizes digestion

Interested in finding out more, read an interview with Dr. Ruscio on “The Science Behind Intermittent Fasting and Circadian Rhythm”, April 17, 2019



Label Language—Fact or Fabrication

Food labels are confusing and can be even misleading! What's worse, there are no global standard for labeling packaged foods (as noted by UC Davis Integrative Medicine). How often have we been lead to believe a produce is healthy just by what the manufacturer has advertised on the package? They are given free range to claim whatever they want on the cover. For instance, "Good source of protein", "Lower your risk of heart disease" or "Gluten-free". The product may be a "good" source of protein, but it may also be very high in salt and/or saturated fats. It may be "gluten-free" but tons of sugar has been added to enhance the flavor.

Packaged and processed foods are a big business. Food manufacturers actually hire experts to create a formula that will be LITERALLY irresistible to the human palate. Food marketers know just how to manipulate the system so those not-so-healthy options look much more appealing. Reading the entire package, front and **especially back**, is a must. Ideally, we want to try to minimize the amount of food we consume that comes in a package since it may have been highly processed. There are some higher quality, healthy options that come in packages, and in the day-to-day challenges of balancing life and work, many of us may not have the time to cook from scratch. The ingredients are pretty straight forward when you pick up a bag of carrots verses a bag of carrot shaped chips. Even if you do read the label, it can still be very daunting and confusing. They design it so it's hard to differentiate the important information from the less important. Here are some things to keep in mind:

1. Start here —

2. Check calories —

3. Limit these nutrients —

4. Get enough of these nutrients —

5. Footnote —

Nutrition Facts		
Serving Size 1 cup (228g) Servings Per Container 2		
Amount Per Serving		
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110	
		% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12 g		18%
Saturated Fat 3g		15%
Trans Fat 3g		
Cholesterol 30mg		10%
Sodium 470mg		20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g		10%
Dietary Fiber 0g		0%
Sugars 5g		
Protein 5g		
Vitamin A		4%
Vitamin C		2%
Calcium		20%
Iron		4%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories: 2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g	60
Sat Fat	Less than 20g	25
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

6. Quick guide to % DV

- 5% or less is low
- 20% or more is high

Good rule of thumb when it comes to sodium: the content in milligrams (mg) should be at a 1 to 1 ratio or LESS—with the calories per serving. In this example its nearly double (1.9 to 1). A concern if you have high blood pressure.

1. Pay attention to the **serving size**. And especially the number of servings in the package. All nutrients listed will pertain only to ONE serving. In this example, there are 2 servings, therefore, if you eat the entire package, all the numbers will need to be doubled.

2. **Calories** represent how much energy you will get from a serving. Again keep in mind the number of servings you actually consume. You will also see on this example that "calories from fat" are represented. This is good information to have, as you will see next.

3. Nutrients in yellow should be consumed in limited amount. **Key point:** because these nutrients may increase ones risk for certain chronic diseases, you will want to **keep their intake at less than 20% of calories per serving**. Take 110 calories from fat/250 calories per serving=.44 or 44%). **Trans fats** raise your LDL's and should be avoided whenever possible. Even if it reads "0" there could be 0.5 grams which do not have to be listed. If you ate the entire package you would get 1g. This example, I would recommend putting back on the shelf.

4. For the nutrients in green, you will want to see higher percentages. When it comes to **fiber**, you want to choose foods with **at least 2-3 grams** per serving. This item has no fiber.

5. All packages use the same Percent Daily Value of 2,000 calories.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS:

- ⇒ Less than 20% of calories from fat
- ⇒ No trans fat (look for partially hydrogenated vegetable oils usually soybean, cottonseed or canola oils; also found in some *diet* foods)
- ⇒ No cholesterol
- ⇒ No added sugar (new labels should now show this)
- ⇒ 2-3 grams of fiber per serving
- ⇒ Less sodium than the number of calories per serving
- ⇒ When it comes to the **list of ingredients**, less is best. The more ingredients, the more likely there are additives like color, flavoring, preservatives, and other unidentifiable chemicals. If you can't pronounce it, chances are you want to avoid it. The list is in descending order of it's content in the product. Therefore the first ingredient has the most presence in that item.

Meal Planning For Your Health

With the juggling of work, school and activities that make up family life as we know it today, cooking a healthy meal can be merely a wish rather than a reality. With a little planning, time and commitment, it is possible to set yourself and your family up for a healthy, low stress meal most if not every night of the week.

Now you know your situation best. You know what you are willing and capable of committing to. So see what might fit for YOU. Whenever possible, get other family members involved in the planning and in the preparation.

Look for ways you can save time during the week by:

Stock your pantry and freezer—Having these things on hand can save you trips to the store and temptation to order out:

- ★ canned beans (black, pinto, chickpeas/garbanzo, cannellini, the list goes on and on) Note: when using canned beans, drain and rinse under running water to wash off some of the sodium.
- ★ Canned tomatoes
- ★ Whole-grain pastas and quick cooking grains like quinoa
- ★ Frozen vegetables are a great option to fresh produce, especially those items not yet in season
- ★ Frozen fruit can add a nice sweetness to some easy meals, be daring!

Batch cook—

- ★ making a whole grain such as rice or quinoa for multiple uses throughout the week. This may mean tripling the recipe on the package.
- ★ Throwing several sweet potatoes in the oven on Sunday so during the week, all you have to do is heat them up to add to your meal. Why not have a loaded sweet potato as your meal? Check out <https://www.loveandlemons.com/healthy-loaded-sweet-potatoes/>
- ★ Wash and dry heads of romaine lettuce and store in your refrigerator for easy access.
- ★ Cut up those carrots, celery, peppers, cucumbers, etc ahead of time so throwing together a salad will be a snap throughout the week for lunches or dinner starters. Only thing you'll need to add is your favorite dressing. Be careful not to defeat the low calorie density of the salad by drowning it in a high calorie dressing.
- ★ Doubling up recipes whenever possible will provide options for the next day in terms of lunch or dinner.
- ★ Fill your oven—while baking those sweet potatoes, add a sheet pan of vegetables to roast at the same time (carrots, onions, eggplant, zucchini, peppers, the options will be endless)
- ★ Steaming vegetables, especially frozen, takes minutes. It's the healthiest option for cooking them since all the nutrients remain.
- ★ Soups, stews, chili—making ahead and freezing leftovers can make an easy meal on busy nights. Store in however many serving sizes you need. Make sure before freezing, the food is cooled thoroughly in the refrigerator.

Spices—

Having a few of your favorite spices always on hand can make any meal come to life. Fresh or dried, they can add that extra layer of flavor that brings out the delicious taste of food without adding salt or oils.

Recipes—

- ★ There are loads of recipes on the internet which can make it overwhelming to decide. This is where planning ahead comes in. Pick a few recipes that you know you will have time to prepare.
- ★ Plan your batch cooking around what time consuming ingredient you can have ready so minimal has to be done when you get home from work.

Download a meal plan app on your phone—

- ★ MealBoard
- ★ Allrecipes Dinner Spinner
- ★ Mealime
- ★ Paprika Recipe Manager

To get more information on available apps and what they offer, check out <https://www.techpout.com/best-meal-planning-apps/>



Is Organic Healthier and Safer?

This is a question I hear a lot. And through the research and study comparison done by Dr. Greger, author of "How Not To Die" and founder of NutritionFacts.org, surprisingly "organic foods do not seem to have significantly more vitamins and minerals". (<https://nutritionfacts.org/topics/organic-foods/>)

Here are a few take aways from an article he wrote. In addition, if you go to his website and search for "organic foods" you will find many informative videos on this topic.

- They do seem to have higher levels of antioxidants since they typically get lower levels of a synthetic nitrogen fertilizer that conventionally grown plants get.
- Conventional produce appears to have twice the level of cadmium, one of three toxic heavy metals, along with mercury and lead.
- Organic may reduce your exposure to pesticides, but not eliminate them entirely.



What is the best way to wash produce?

Washing off your produce with water may be enough. The special products claiming to work better, when tested, were no better than simple water.

Straight white vinegar is effective but not recommended.

The **best solution** for washing your produce is salt water: 1 part salt to 9 parts water

Bottom line:

Regardless of whether your produce is organic or not, it's MUCH better to eat it in whatever way you can get it rather than not at all!

Check out the article and this video for more information on organic meat, eggs, and dairy and **find out the Top Food Safety Mistake many people make.**

<https://nutritionfacts.org/video/how-to-make-your-own-fruit-and-vegetable-wash/>

<https://nutritionfacts.org/topics/organic-foods/>





Calorie Density vs. Portion Control

Consider this idea: Approach weight loss with a whole new mindset! Typically, diets will have you count, restrict, measure and weigh everything you eat or drink. What may “measure up” to be high in calories and within the “recommended” portion size, leaves most of us feeling hungry, unsatisfied and deprived. Generally it’s easier to

loss weight but keeping it off is the real challenge because living with all those restrictions isn’t fun nor sustainable health-wise. No wonder diets are short lived. And no surprise that upwards of 90% of the weight lost will creep back within the year.

Calorie density (CD) is simply the number of calories per gram/weight of food. Foods high in fats and/or sugar tend to be packed with more calories. If you are trying to lose weight, chances are you are watching your total calories. Eating foods with a high calorie density will quickly have you reaching your calorie goal in a much smaller portion of food. Take the example to the right. If you cut the 800 calorie plate in half, you can see the plate is half empty. But if you fill it with more LOW CALORIE DENSE foods like vegetables or fruit, you can eat a larger volume of food but with no added calories.



Category 1



Category 2



Category 3



Category 4



Portion sizes come into play the HIGHER the calorie density is for a particular food. Generally when consuming foods from Category 1—vegetables and whole fruits—low calorie dense foods— you can eat almost unlimited quantities. As calorie density starts to go up, you need to start watching portions more. This includes foods like meats, rice, beans, potatoes but they can still make up a good portion of a healthy diet. And then as you get into Category 3 with the dry foods (pretzels), cheese’s, eggs, some cheesy pasta dishes, that’s when you need to start exerting more portion size and control. Finally, in Category 4, the higher calorie density range, we know what these foods are, you want to pay close attention. Not to say you can never have these food items; just that it will require more control in terms of how much you eat. These foods also tend to be the foods we crave the most, and for very good reason. They are designed in such a way that their salt, fat, and sugar combination make them irresistible to the palate!

Creating New Habits: Focusing on creating new habits rather than stressing over old ones can yield some surprising changes, naturally. Here are a few things to consider:

- ★ **Drink water** especially right before a meal. Good for overall health. Minimize calorie laden beverages. Even diet beverages tend to increase your appetite.
- ★ Consider starting your meal with a **small salad** (watch the dressings and toppings) or **bowl of vegetable broth based soup**. Tends to reduce the amount of calories consumed in the next course.
- ★ **Increase your fiber** by eating more leafy green vegetables and fresh fruit. Fiber requirements for men = 35grams per day and women = 25 grams.
- ★ **Chew your food slowly**. Most of us eat very fast; in less than 7 minutes you may be done a whole meal. Extend that eating time to 20 minutes whenever you can by chewing much slower. Our digestion of food actually begins in the mouth. When you eat food high in fiber, you will naturally slow down your chewing. Bet you can’t eat a big kale salad in 7 minutes! :-)

30-MINUTE QUINOA "FRIED RICE"



This could make the perfect weeknight meal, or one that you make ahead of time and then just reheat for dinner! For a little more crunch and staying power, they added some cashews. If you don't like cashews, perhaps try peanuts. Both good sources of protein and fat. Make it your own. But keep it simple. And most of all, enjoy!



INGREDIENTS

QUINOA

- 3 cups cooked and cooled white quinoa*

SAUCE

- 4 Tbsp coconut aminos or low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp maple syrup
- 1 Tbsp almond butter (or sub peanut butter)
- 2 Tbsp lime juice
- 2 tsp chili garlic sauce of your choice (plus more to taste)
- 1/4 cup diced green onion
- 1/2 cup roasted cashews (optional // or sub raw cashews)

THE REST

- 1 Tbsp sesame oil (or sub water)
- 1 cup finely chopped carrots
- 3 Tbsp coconut aminos/low-sodium soy sauce (DIVIDED)
- 1 cup chopped green onion (save green tops for garnish)
- 1 1/2 cups chopped broccoli

Recipe from Minimalist Baker

Servings: 4

Course: Entree, Side

Cuisine: Chinese-Inspired, Gluten-Free, Vegan

Freezer Friendly: 1 month

Does it keep? 4 Days in frig

DIRECTIONS:

1. If you haven't prepared quinoa yet (*prep/cook time does not include making quinoa), do so first by adding rinsed quinoa to a large saucepan and toasting over medium heat for 2 minutes. Add water and bring to a boil. Once boiling, reduce heat to a simmer, cover, and cook for 18 minutes or until water is absorbed and the quinoa is fluffy. Transfer cooked quinoa to a glass bowl or storage container and refrigerate (uncovered) to cool. Once completely cooled, cover. Will keep in the refrigerator up to 1 week or in the freezer up to 1 month.
2. In the meantime, prepare sauce by adding all ingredients to a mixing bowl and whisking to combine. Taste and adjust flavor as needed, adding more chili garlic sauce for heat, lime for acidity, maple syrup for sweetness, almond butter for nuttiness, or coconut aminos for saltiness and depth of flavor. Set aside.
3. Heat a large skillet (or wok) over medium-high heat. Once hot, add sesame oil (or water), carrots, and one third of the coconut aminos. Cover and cook for 3-4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Carrots take the longest to cook through, so they need a little time on their own.
4. Next, add chopped green onion, broccoli, and cashews (optional), along with another one third of the coconut aminos. Stir, cover, and cook for 2 minutes or until broccoli appears slightly browned.
5. Add cooked quinoa and the remaining one third of the coconut aminos. Stir to coat and cook for 1 minute. Then add sauce and stir.
6. Cook for another 4-5 minutes, stirring occasionally. You want the quinoa to have a chance to sit at the bottom of your pan and get crispy.
7. Serve as is, or garnish with additional cashews, lime wedges, and chopped green onion. Best when fresh. Leftovers keep covered in the refrigerator up to 4 days or in the freezer up to 1 month. Reheat on the stovetop until hot.

NOTES:

*Prep time does not include cooking quinoa.

*3 cups cooked quinoa is equivalent to approximately 1 1/2 cups (276 g) dry quinoa

*In place of the chili garlic sauce, you can also sub 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes or 1-2 hot chilies (per 2 tsp chili garlic sauce).

* You can use a frozen vegetable mix to same you time chopping AND cooking.

*Nutrition information is a rough estimate calculated without optional ingredients.

Debby Schiffer, Wellness Director for BURLCO & TRICO JIF

E-mail: debby_schiffer@targetingwellness.com Office: 856-322-1220 Cell: 856-520-9908



As a Certified Health and Wellness Coach (NBC-HWC), I can help you tackle these nutritional challenges by being your advocate in accountability/. Reach out to me via email or phone to discuss if this might be a fit for you. We all have the inner wisdom, sometimes us just need someone to help keep us on track towards our goals.