

Avoid summer eating pitfalls



Pump up the music!

Experts agree that when you listen to music while exercising, you tend to match your pace to the tune.

Keep the rhythm upbeat! It's also a good idea to update your playlist weekly; new songs will help keep you motivated.

With summer almost upon us, it is very easy for routines go hay wire. And with nothing to do after a few days in the pool, some kids head straight for the refrigerator or snack bar because they think they're hungry when they're actually just bored. Add in regular ice cream stops on a hot summer night, hot dogs at the ball park, and funnel cake at the fair, and you've got the recipe for a summer-long bad-eating binge. That vicious cycle of poor eating habits leads to weight gain and, ultimately, if left unchecked, the potential for early onset of chronic diseases. Sweet treats are part of summer's fun, but only when eaten in moderation. Here, some advice on how to stay on track over the coming months:

Get Enough Sleep. Studies already show that late nights and sleeping in are known risk factors for weight gain. When kids stay up late, they are more likely to watch TV and snack on dense, low-nutrient foods. And, a shorter night's sleep limits the body's production of leptin, a hormone known to promote satiety. That means kids wake up hungrier, and are quicker to reach for high-carb, calorie rich foods. It's okay for your child to stay up a little bit later during the shorter summer nights, but keep on hand late-night snacks rich in nutrients like creamy, nonfat yogurt, a handful of crunchy roasted nuts or fruit.

Take a fast food vacation. Kids crave fast food but that doesn't mean you should park your family at the nearest McDonald's romper room every day to escape the heat. Trade french fries and big macs for picnics at the park or beach. Take a pass on the ball park hot dog and instead, load the cooler with healthy alternatives like turkey sandwiches or light salads.

Keep active! Sure it's hotter than heck, and few kids want to run around outdoors in the heat of the day. But find other ways to stay active. Encourage swim races at the pool and playing Manhunt after dusk. If all else fails, turn on the Wii in an air conditioned room. Keep exercise a part of your vacation too. Biking, jogging, and signing up for active activities, rather than lazing at the pool or beach, will do everyone's body and brain a whole lot of good.

Feeling your inner green thumb by planting an herb garden

By Sarah Simental, Dietetic Intern

Well, it's finally here. Spring is upon us! Although, the temperatures have been feeling more like summer, we can't skip over the wonderful season of Spring. Everything around us is green, blooming and absolutely beautiful. What better way to welcome Spring than to grow an herb(s). Due to the rich color of herbs, they contain vitamins and special antioxidants that have great benefits for our health. Studies have shown us that herbs contain more antioxidants than some fruits and vegetables. In addition, they require very little space, just a bit of sunlight and can be grown inside or out.

The fun part of growing herbs at home is they are low in cost, easy to get started and can be a fun addition of flavor to any meal. Herbs are a great addition to meats, sauces, soups, dips, teas and vegetables. Not only this, it is fun for your child/children to participate in the care of a plant that can be used and eaten in a meal. For an added bonus, you can teach them about responsibility by allowing your child to take care of the herb.

So, how can you get started? Herbs can be found at most grocery stores, some drug stores and home improvement stores. As a family, discuss with your child/children which herb(s) would best suit your family and your meals so that everyone will enjoy it. Basil, Dill, Parsley, Sage and Lavender are popular and most commonly used for any beginner. Once your herb is home, the pot you purchased it in is good for short term use, however keep in mind that your herb needs room to grow. In order to help your herb grow and live long you will want to purchase a slightly larger pot or plant it in a small section of your yard. Pots can be purchased at any store. Be sure to look for a pot that allows for drainage of water. Purchasing additional fertilizer will help you and your plant in the repotting/replanting process. Remember to give your plant some sun, water and most of all, love. The link below is a great resource to use for any further questions on growing your herb(s). You can also pick up small booklets on herbs at your nearest home improvement store. Happy Spring using your new herb!

<http://herbgardening.com/>

Easy Peach Tart



This is a fun recipe to you can make together. All you need to do is slice the peaches.

Ingredients:

- 1 package Pillsbury Pie Crusts*
- 4 yellow peaches
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 pinches ground cloves

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line baking sheet with a piece of parchment paper.
2. Cut peach flesh away from pit, then slice into wedges.
3. Combine peach slices in a bowl with brown sugar, cinnamon and cloves.
4. Remove pie crust from package and unroll onto parchment paper.
5. Spoon peach mixture into a pile in the center of the dough.
6. Use hands to fold the outside edges of the dough up and around the peaches, leaving about a 4-inch circle of peaches exposed. Use a pastry brush and brush the remaining peach juice-sugar mixture in the bowl onto the outside of the pie crust.
7. Bake in oven 30 minutes. Remove promptly; let cool for 1 to 1½ hours before serving.