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Eat More Eat Light

I love food! No, I mean I REALLY love food! Unfortunately, I sometimes gravitate toward the foods that are not the best for me. For the past few weeks I have been working on some nutritional presentations that I will be doing for the school, 4-H Club, and other organizations. Wow, what an eye opener! It has made me really stop and think about what I am eating and how I am spending my daily caloric intake.

First, let's start with the daily soft drink many people consume. Carbonated drinks normally have 200 calories in a 16-ounce serving. All of these calories come from sugar, and sugar contains 16 calories per teaspoon. By this measurement, a 16-ounce serving contains 12.5 teaspoons of sugar. Measure that much sugar into a clear glass and then think about putting that much sugar into your body every time you have a soft drink, then multiply that by how many drinks you have in one day. Now that is truly an eye-opener!

What about your daily food intake? Did you know:

- * One chocolate peanut candy (the size of an M&M) = 9 strawberries
- * One chocolate chip = 5 pounds of grapes
- * One average fast food breakfast sandwich = 12 pounds of fresh fruit salad
- * Two tablespoons of guacamole = As much salsa as you would like to eat
- * Two fast food french fries = two whole baked potatoes with parsley
- * One corn chip = 40 baby carrots
- * Two nacho chips = 2.86 cups of air-popped popcorn
- * One ounce of potato chips = 10 ounces of pretzels
- * One chocolate covered donut = 133 oranges

As you can see by these examples it is very important to think about and plan your meals and snacks. You can eat many healthy foods that will fill you up. You have to decide how you want to spend your calories. One potato chip is certainly not going to fill you up, but 40 baby carrots will! Depriving yourself of the foods you like isn't the answer either; just enjoy those little indulgences occasionally.

As you take all this information into consideration, I encourage you to think about the food choices you make for you and your family. If you have children, start teaching them at an early age about making healthy food choices, which will hopefully turn into life-long good habits.

For more information on this topic, please feel free to contact the Texas AgriLife Extension Service office at 903/473-5000, ext. 157.

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