

Wise Notes for Consumers

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Strategies for Weight Management

It's easy to become overweight in America. Every day we are confronted with an abundance of delicious food that is easily accessible not only in restaurants and gas stations, but also via drive-thru and home delivery. That's one reason why the average American gains one to two pounds a year, the equivalent of eating only 100 to 200 extra daily calories, such as a few extra cookies, a second handful of chips or an extra helping at lunch.

Following are three weight management strategies from the American College of Sports Medicine that can help minimize fat gain and optimize desired fat loss without feeling denied or deprived of enjoyable food.

- Strategy #1- Boost your calcium intake. Eating three to four servings of calcium-rich low fat dairy foods per day contributes to loss of more fat and less muscle compared to dieters who ate less dairy.
- Strategy #2- Eat Breakfast. Although skipping breakfast may seem a good way to eliminate calories, breakfast skippers tend to be fatter than breakfast eaters. When people eat a larger-than-normal breakfast, they end up eating almost 100 fewer calories by the end of the day, an amount that can curb creeping obesity.

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- Strategy #3- Eat more fiber and whole grain foods. Fiber rich foods are satiating (the point that you feel full and choose to stop eating). They also tend to be bulky which in turn helps you reduce the calorie content of a casserole by 30 percent by adding bulky vegetables (mushrooms, celery, peppers) and people will consume fewer calories without noticing the difference.

Given the abundance of food in our society, we all need skills to manage the food environment. This means eating breakfast and consuming more calcium, fiber, and whole grains.

And don't forget another great way to weight management is by exercise! Walk Across Texas teams are forming right now with the start date set for Monday, March 6. Call the Extension office at 940/627-3341 to obtain more information about weight management strategies and Walk Across Texas.

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