

IT'S POSSIBLE TO IMPROVE EATING HABITS

Diane Stacy is a nutrition educator and coach and practices Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). Diane has a master's degree in holistic nutrition, a certificate in nutritional counseling, an advanced EFT Certificate of Completion, and a bachelor's degree in medical technology. Diane writes monthly nutrition articles for Senior Digest. This article is published in the January 2008 issue. Diane can be reached at (401) 949-2917 or dchoices@verizon.net. Her website is www.choicesandprevention.com.

The start of a new year is a good time to reflect on the past 12 months and plan your new goals for the coming year. Last January, my article focused on eating more whole foods and less processed foods as a goal for 2007. Did you consume more fresh vegetables and fruits than in the past? This should continue to be a goal for 2008.

Although we are in an age of taking pills, my January and February article cautioned the use of dietary supplements. Supplements cannot replace smart eating, adequate sleep or active living. When necessary, food based and natural ingredients in dietary supplements are your best choice. It is important to read the labels. Nutritional Fact Labels for both dietary supplements and food products provide a wealth of information and help

Diane K. Stacy
February 8, 2008

you make your selection when comparing against various brands.

February's article also focused on absorption of nutrients as key to good health. We cannot forget that adequate chewing of food helps with absorption of nutrients and might even solve your heartburn problems. Millet was a topic of March's article. This highly nutritious, non-glutinous and non-acid forming food is not just for the birds. Millet is easy to digest and is great for people who have celiac sprue. Individuals with reduced thyroid gland activity (hypothyroidism) should consult a health care practitioner before adding millet to their diet.

Soy has benefits as stated in the April article, but one must eat a variety of plant foods, not a soy-based diet. May's article focused on the need to have limited sun exposure (about 10 to 15 minutes of sunlight at least 2 or 3 times per week) in order to avoid a deficiency in Vitamin D, which helps maintain strong bones and possibly prevent cancer. Good food sources of Vitamin D include salmon, mackerel, tuna, halibut, sardines and sweet potatoes, as well as milk and fortified breakfast cereals.

Eating seasonally and buying locally grown food was recommended in the June article. Sprouts can be purchased or easily grown

in your home using a variety of sprouting containers. The July article stated that sprouts are a good source of protein, as well as vitamins A & C. Sprouts are easily digested and can be added to salads, sandwiches or topped on prepared meals.

In the mist of our recent stormy weather, you might not think about watermelon, but during the warm days of summer, the August article on the benefits of watermelon was appropriate. Watermelon is packed with lots of nutrients with low calories. What a great combination! During a recent vacation to a warmer climate, I was fortunate to eat watermelon and yes it did have seeds so I could relive my childhood.

September's article warned about partially hydrogenated oils and November's article promoted eating whole grains. Again, reading the Nutritional Facts Labels provides valuable information. Look at the ingredients, and check the sodium and dietary fiber contents.

Over the past year, I have received several inquiries from my readers. My October article was inspired by the search for cooking classes. The RI Food Bank's website – www.rifoodbank.org provides helpful shopping tips and recipes designed to be low cost, contain nutritious ingredients and are easy to prepare. The

IT'S POSSIBLE TO IMPROVE EATING HABITS

website also contains twelve “Common Sense Cooking” episodes well worth watching. Most libraries have computers in case you don't have one.

The last article for 2007 focused on RI's Food Stamp program. My articles are not useful if you struggle to pay your bills and can't afford nutritious meals. Call the Food Stamp Outreach Project at (866) 306-0270 to find out about eligibility and to learn how to apply for the new benefits card.

Although many of us have developed poor eating habits over more than 50 years, it is never too late to change. The positive change will put us in the direction of improved health. Eating a balanced diet high in nutrients and fiber and low in sodium is the recommended target for the coming year. My articles will hopefully inspire you to meet this goal.