Nutrition Notes - January 2019

HAPPY NEW YEAR

If you are like millions of other Americans, you have set a goal to eat healthier, be more active and lose weight in 2019. It is common to start the year with good intentions only to then give up when life gets busy or if you don't see the results you want. Not to mention that changing your lifestyle is hard work! It takes a lot of time and effort because habits – even unhealthy ones - are automatic and practiced.

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Consider these tips to help you get started and see success:

Log it to lose it.
Research has shown that people that keep a food record – written or electronic – lose significantly more weight than those that don't. Sometimes you don't even have to calculate your calorie intake, just seeing what you eat can increase your awareness enough to influence your food choices and portions. Keeping a record of activity showed similar results in studies. Those that kept track of how much they exercised were consistently more active and lost more weight than those that didn't keep a record.

Believe in yourself.
People with low self-esteem and poor body image are more likely to struggle with emotional eating and weight gain. A University of Arizona study also found that body dissatisfaction was strongly linked to disordered eating. When studies have been done on people that have lost weight and kept it off there are very few commonalities in how they ate or exercised; the main thread among them was the belief in themselves that they could do it. So speak nicely to yourself and about yourself – even if your comments are just in your head. If you are criticizing yourself for what or how much you eat instead of building yourself up – the result will still be a lower opinion of yourself and your abilities.

Step on the scale regularly.
Studies show greater weight loss in those that weigh themselves weekly. Just remember that lots of things can make the scale go up – usually only temporarily - other than what you eat such as recently lifting weights, eating foods high in sodium that may cause you to retain fluids and hormone changes to name a few. I have seen many people doing wonderful things to improve their health only to quit because the scale didn't go down as fast or as far as they thought it should. The scale is only one tool to measure your progress - how do your clothes fit you, how is your energy level, are you able to exercise more than before, etc…

"A goal without a plan is just a wish." *Antoine de Saint-Exupery*
Set realistic <u>and</u> flexible goals for yourself. When you go on a trip you don't just get in your car and drive. You map out your route so you know what roads to take, and your GPS will give you alternate routes for road construction or heavy traffic. Take time to make your plan to achieve your goal. If something takes you off track like an injury or family/job demands, adjust your plan. It may take longer to get to your finish line, but you will still get there.

One size does not fit everyone. This is two-fold. First, we all have different genes and we are not all designed to be the same size. Focus on being healthy at whatever size you are today. Second, make sure that you see the value in what you are changing. Just because your friend lost weight following a certain program doesn't mean that you will have the same result. Remember, what you do to lose weight is what you will need to keep doing to keep the weight off. Make lifestyle changes that work for you every day – not just until you reach your goal weight.

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