

NUTRITION BITES

October 2022



CARE MANAGEMENT

Don't Fall Into These Habits

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During the fall when the temperatures drop and there are fewer daylight hours, we tend to consume more food and reduce our exercise. It is estimated on average that we consume an additional 200 calories per day, which can lead to weight gain.

While we often blame weight gain on the holidays, there may be other factors contributing to the extra pounds.

Here are a few factors to consider as we head into the fall and winter months.

Halloween sweets

While Halloween is only one day out of the year, we tend to eat Halloween candy all month long. It is tempting to stock up as soon as the sugary goodness hits the shelves in August but waiting to buy it until right before Halloween will make it easier to not dig into it early. Also, try to only buy the amount you need so that you don't have much left over at the end of the night. Let yourself enjoy one or two of your favorites and then find ways to get rid of the rest.

Indulgent soups

Soups are a great way to warm up when the colder months roll around, but they can be high in sodium and use lots of cream and cheeses. The American Heart Association recommends limiting sodium to 2,300 milligrams per day and ideally consuming less. If you are

making soup from scratch, you have more control over the ingredients like using lower fat milk and less cheese; adding more vegetables, herbs and spices; and limiting the amount of salt added. If you are opting to buy soup, look for low-sodium varieties. If you are having a creamy soup, watch your portion size as it can be easy to fill up your bowl and eat more than you realize. Pairing your soup with a salad is a great way to round out your meal.

Sporting events

Autumn is a popular time for college and professional sports, and there are often lots of gameday snacks to go around. It doesn't mean you can't enjoy a little of everything, but make sure there are healthier options mixed in with the wings, chips and dips. Try having cut-up veggies with hummus or using the veggies with the other dips instead of chips. For chips and other salty snacks, try portioning a small amount onto your plate instead of mindlessly reaching into the bowl or bag, which can easily lead to eating more than planned.

Exercise

Now that it starts getting darker earlier, we lose the extra time we had during the summer for outdoor activities. Plan ahead and think of ways to stay active, especially if you normally exercised later in the day. For example, take your evening walk as soon as you get home from work as opposed to later. Think of all your options and do what works best for you.



Fall produce to add to your shopping list

There's an abundance of produce available in the fall, but here are a few items to consider adding to your shopping list.

Winter squash: There's an endless variety of winter squash like butternut squash, acorn squash, spaghetti squash and pumpkin. Squash is excellent when cubed and roasted or cut in half, roasted and stuffed with other ingredients. Consider adding roasted squash to soups, stews and salads. And don't forget about canned pumpkin puree (not the pumpkin pie filling) that can be added to soups or oatmeal for a fall-inspired breakfast or used in baking. Winter squash is full of vitamins A and C, potassium, antioxidants and fiber.

Pears: Often overshadowed by apples, pears are a delicious fall fruit. They are unique and do not ripen on trees and instead ripen at room temperature after they are picked. Just like apples, there is a large variety of pears, and some are best eaten fresh while others are better for baking or canning. Pears can be a surprising and delicious addition to a savory meal; try adding a few slices to a sandwich or panini. Pears are also packed full of nutrition. One medium pear with the skin has six grams of fiber.

Okra: We commonly think of fried okra, but there are many other delicious ways to use this vegetable. Okra has thickening properties like cornstarch and makes a great addition to gumbo or Indian curries. If you want to reduce its thickening properties, try grilling or sautéing it and then adding it to your recipe. Okra is a good source of vitamin C, potassium and fiber.

Cranberries: These bright red tart berries have many uses, fresh or dried. Try pairing them with savory dishes such as chicken or turkey. Slow cook a turkey breast in the crockpot with fresh cranberries, some orange juice and herbs for an easy dinner. When purchasing dried cranberries, look for lower sugar varieties, and add them to wild rice, salads or oatmeal, or use them in a trail mix. Cranberries are a good source of vitamin C, fiber and antioxidants.

Parsnips: Related to the carrot, parsnips have the same shape as their orange cousin but have white flesh. Parsnips can be eaten raw, but you will typically find them cooked. They are a good source of vitamin C, folate, potassium and fiber. A half cup of cooked parsnips has three grams of fiber. Try roasted or mashed parsnips as a side dish or use them pureed into soups or atop a shepherd's pie instead of mashed potatoes.

Beets: These vegetables thrive in cold weather temperatures and can be eaten both raw and cooked, but roasting or steaming them whole makes it easy to remove the skin. Beets are a great addition to salads or as thinly sliced baked chips. Commonly known for their bright red color, you can also find these in a rainbow of colors including yellow and candy-striped (red and white circles when sliced). Also, make sure to save the leaves from the top of the beetroot as these are similar to spinach and taste great sautéed. Beets are high in nitrates, which can help lower blood pressure, and are also full of fiber, potassium and antioxidants.

Kale: This is a hardy cold weather vegetable that tastes sweeter after a frost and can survive a snowstorm. Kale provides a wide variety of nutrients including vitamins A, B6, C and K; calcium; potassium; copper and manganese. Consider using kale in salads, turning it into kale chips, adding handfuls into soups or wilting it into a pasta dish. Just make sure to remove the rib in the center because it is tough and has a bitter flavor.



Featured Recipe

Butternut Squash Chili With Black Beans

For complete recipe and nutrition facts: [Eating Well](#)

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Total time: 50 minutes

Servings: 6



INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp plus 1 tsp canola oil, olive oil or avocado oil
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 large onion, diced
½ tsp salt
2 tbsp chili powder
1 tbsp ground cumin
¼ tsp ground cinnamon
¼ tsp ground chipotle chili pepper (or to taste)
2 cups low sodium or no-salt-added vegetable broth
3 cups butternut squash, cubed
2 (14 ounce) cans of black beans, rinsed and drained
1 (14 ounce) can of low sodium or no-salt-added crushed tomatoes
1 (14 ounce) can of low sodium or no-salt-added diced tomatoes
½ cup Greek yogurt (for serving)
¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped (for serving)
¼ cup red onion, minced (for serving)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat oil in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add garlic, onion and salt. Cook and stir often until it starts to brown (about four to six minutes). Add chili powder, cumin, cinnamon and chipotle chili and stir to coat.
2. Add broth and squash. Increase heat to high and bring to a simmer, stirring occasionally. Cover and reduce heat to medium-low. Continue to simmer until squash is tender (about 18 to 20 minutes).
3. Stir in black beans, crushed tomatoes and diced tomatoes. Increase heat to medium-high and bring to a simmer, stirring often.
4. Again, reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered and stirring often, until the flavors are blended together and the chili has thickened (about five to seven minutes).
5. Serve topped with a dollop of Greek yogurt and sprinkled with cilantro and diced onion, if desired.

Serving size (1 1/3 cups): 246 calories; carbohydrates 41g; dietary fiber 12.5g; sugars 7.5g; fat 4.9g; saturated fat 0.4g; folate 16.9mg; calcium 127.7mg; iron 3.6mg; magnesium 91.1mg; potassium 579.7mg; sodium 395.9mg; thiamin 0.1mg.

