

# Celebrate! *A Healthy You*

*A newsletter devoted to helping individuals of every size live in a healthy body*

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## Small Steps Better Than Giant Leaps

The shortest route to better health comes in small steps rather than giant leaps. Little changes are easier than big ones, yet add up to great improvements over time. Each small step is movement in a healthier direction and far better than grand goals that prove too ambitious to attain.

The best place to begin is with the step that sounds the easiest. Experts say it takes at least 21 days to acquire a new habit. Wait until this new step has become established before taking another. One step will lead to more, and to better habits that last for life.

### Here are some small steps to try--

#### For healthier eating habits:

- \* Eat one more piece of fruit every day. Whole fruit has fiber and more phytochemicals than fruit juice.
- \* Try a new vegetable every week. Recipes are available in grocery store produce aisles, the library and internet.
- \* Add one more whole grain food every day. Whole grain foods like graham crackers, brown rice, oatmeal, popcorn, whole wheat bread have more flavor and fiber than other grain products.
- \* Keep a bag of washed and cut

up raw veggies alongside a container of salad dressing in a visible place in the refrigerator, handy for a quick snack.

- \* Order soup and salad combo instead of burger with fries once a week.
- \* Eat breakfast. Something is better than nothing. Eat breakfast at coffee break time if food is unappealing early in the morning.
- \* Drink milk with at least one meal for the essential calcium, phosphorous and other bone builders it contains.
- \* Eat to satisfy hunger rather than boredom or an emotional need.
- \* Serve snacks on a plate or in a bowl. An open bag or carton is an invitation to eat mindlessly until it is all gone.
- \* Use water in place of one soft drink per day. Soft drinks, fruit-flavored beverages and sports drinks bring little to the table besides calories. Water is a better thirst quencher than these other beverages.

#### For improved fitness:

- \* Take a two-minute walk during your lunch break. Next week increase to five minutes.

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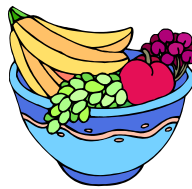
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### Small Steps Better

- \* Park farther away from the door than you normally do. By parking away from other cars, you'll be less likely to get scratches and dents on your car and sneak in a little extra walking.
- \* While watching TV, exercise when commercials come on. Try calisthenics like push ups and crunches. Or, keep hand weights next to your easy chair and put them to use while the ads play.
- \* Walk around the block with your child or spouse after dinner.
- \* Use time waiting for copies at the copy machine or for the clothes dryer cycle to end to do wall pushups.
- \* Stuck in a traffic jam? Neck and shoulder stretches will relieve tension as well as aid flexibility.
- \* Do leg lifts or calf raises while talking on the phone.

## Smart Snacking

One of the trends cited by Megan McCrory, PhD, in her research at Tufts University into why Americans are eating more is that we snack more than we did twenty or thirty years ago. Snacking per se is not the problem. The trouble with snacks is more likely to be in the kinds or amounts of food eaten.



Snacks can certainly be part of healthful eating. Well-chosen snacks like fruits, vegetables, whole grain foods and dairy products can be a great way to fit these nutritious foods into our eating pattern. A piece of fruit in midmorning or a few baby carrots to munch on while fixing dinner can help you reach the recommended Five a Day.

Too often, however, snacks are likely to be high-fat, heavily – salted, or loaded-with-sugar foods that come in a vending machine or grabbed on the run at a convenience store. Although not every snack needs to be highly nutritious, making healthful choices in moderate amounts most of the time turns snacks into an asset instead of liability.

A Smart Snack Bag helps keep you in control of snacking while maintaining a normal eating pattern. With your snacks easily available, vending machine or fast food options will have less appeal. Use any kind of bag or even a box. Keep it where you most often find yourself getting hungry, an office desk drawer perhaps. You may even want one to keep and another one in the car.

## Activity suggestions for January



Many community and church groups set up **winter sports programs** offering a variety of activities for adults. Sign up to play basketball or volleyball and make new friends as well!

**Hiking in winter** provides an opportunity to see your favorite trails in a new way. Without leaves to block the view, you may discover things you haven't noticed before like rock formations or little waterfalls. Dress in layers and don't forget to take along water and a first aid kit.



**Try out** a different kind of exercise by checking out a beginner video from the library or signing up for an introductory class at a community center or adult education program. Make sure the video or class is a basic one allowing you to get a good feel for the new activity, be it yoga, pilates, tai chi or whatever.

## Smart Snack Bag Ideas

Include foods you enjoy and that satisfy you. By choosing foods that do not require refrigeration, you won't have to worry about cold packs.

Animal crackers	Cute shapes for a sweet taste. Enjoy one by one.
Bagels	Chewy carbohydrates! Try the mini ones.
Bagel chips	Crispy carbohydrates!
Cereals	Pour into a baggie from home. Buy little boxes. Some can be used as a bowl – just cut open and add milk. Don't forget instant oatmeal. Mmmm.
Cheese	Keep a couple of cracker and cheese packs tucked away.
Crackers	Lots of choices: saltines, bread sticks, whole wheat, cheese, reduced fat.
Dry soup/noodles	Just add boiling water.
Fruit	Oranges and apples keep well for many days. Delicious! Dried fruit is a sweet pick me up. Raisins, dried apricots, prunes, etc.
Graham crackers	Plain! Cinnamon! Chocolate! All satisfy that desire for a bit of sweet.
Granola bars	Tasty! Enjoy bite by bite.
Hard candy	Keep a variety on hand.
Nuts	Very filling. Savor and enjoy one by one.
Peanut butter	Keep a knife and a little jar on hand to spread a thin layer on crackers.
Popcorn	Several tasty microwave versions. Lots of filling fiber.
Pudding	Ready-to-eat types are creamy sweet treats.
Pretzels	Crunchy, crispy satisfaction. And little or no fat!
Rice cakes	Lots of flavors. The mini sizes are super handy.
Veggie juice	Tomato and spicy vegetable varieties are a tasty break from sweets.

Water: Drink plenty all day. Thirst is often misinterpreted as hunger!

## Menu of the Month

Wintry January days call for hearty soups and casseroles. **Easier Than Lasagna** combines all the flavors of this favorite and filling dish with streamlined preparation. Even spinach-haters have been known to find it acceptable in this dish. Spinach can be left out, or another vegetable like chopped broccoli may be substituted if desired. Just keep in mind that the spinach really boosts the calcium and vitamin A content of this recipe. Pair this casserole with a salad of crisp mixed greens, orange segments and red onion rings tossed with vinaigrette dressing. Add a loaf of crunchy bread for a family-pleasing meal that will warm everyone to the tips of their toes.

### Easier Than Lasagna

4 ounces dried pasta like elbow macaroni, mostaccioli, penne, rigatoni, rotini, etc.  
 10-ounce package frozen chopped spinach  
 2 cups prepared tomato sauce or canned seasoned diced tomatoes  
 1 cup reduced fat cottage cheese  
 ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese  
 4 ounces Monterey jack or brick cheese, shredded or thinly sliced.



Cook pasta in boiling water until just barely tender; drain. Meanwhile, thaw spinach in microwave on high power for about 4 minutes. Drain, pressing out as much liquid as possible.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Lightly spray 2-quart baking dish with cooking spray. Place spinach in bottom of casserole. Combine cooked pasta, tomato sauce or tomatoes, cottage cheese and Parmesan cheese and layer on top of spinach. Top with Monterey jack or brick cheese. Bake for 20 minutes until heated through and cheese has melted.

Makes 4 generous servings. Nutrient analysis per serving: 403 Calories, 20g Protein, 43g Carbohydrate, 13g Fat, 850 IU Vitamin A, 17mg Vitamin C, 1064mg Sodium, 699mg Calcium.

Recipe adapted from Meals Without Squals by Christine Berman and Jackie Fromer.



### Words to Consider

“The doors we open and close each day decide the lives we live.”  
 –Flora Whittemore

“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.” – Maya Angelou

“Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value.” Albert Einstein

“Make the most of yourself...for that is all that there is of you.”  
 – Ralph Waldo Emerson

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