Maintaining Your New Healthy Way of Eating

Create Health with Ann Treacy

Keeping your resolution to eat healthy, nutritious foods can be a challenge.   Once you've set a goal to maintain healthy eating habits, how do you go about *actually* doing it so it becomes a lifelong habit?

The good news is that ***once you do something consistently for only a few weeks, it more likely to become a habit.***

Here are some simple techniques to help you avoid those tempting junk foods so you can make wise and healthy decisions in your daily routine and eat healthier for years to come.

Strategies to Avoid Temptation:

1. **Am I hungry?** Ask yourself if you're *really* hungry or if you're eating out of convenience or emotion. Many times you probably aren't as hungry as you think, so try to get involved in a different activity instead of snacking.

2. **Water, water, and more water.** Drink a lot of water each day. Not only is this good for your whole body (both inside and out), ***it can actually make you feel full.*** Also, oftentimes when you think you're *hungry*, your body is actually *thirsty,* so keep yourself well hydrated.

3. **Divert your energy.** Instead of putting all your energy into making two grilled cheese sandwiches with bacon, ***try taking a walk or doing something that requires you to use your hands,*** like knitting or woodworking. It's pretty hard to do these and eat at the same time.

4. **Allow yourself snack time.** Choose healthy snacks instead of chips and salsa or chocolate bars. For snack time, try eating celery, carrots, or cucumber slices dipped into fresh guacamole, fresh fruits, or a make-your-own trail mix with raisins, nuts, and carob chips. (Limit the dried fruits).

   - A good hint for snacking is to ***have healthy snacks readily available in your home,*** and unhealthy snacks completely out of the house; that way, the healthy stuff is easy to grab.
   - Snacks can be considered "mini-meals" as well. Just keep them in the Real Food category.

How to Choose Healthy Foods:

The next time you're off to the grocery store, use these tips to help you choose the right foods and avoid the unhealthy stuff.

1. **Stay away from preservatives.** You don't need that Twinkie that can outlast any environmental disaster! When you *learn to read nutrition labels and ingredient lists,* you'll find that there are many snacks that are full of preservatives. You probably shouldn't buy the food when the ingredient list contains more than a handful of items. Plus, if the expiry date isn't until two years from now, it's being heavily preserved.

2. **Buy lots of fresh vegetables** that you can use to make up a quick and healthy stir-fry with chicken or beef. Buy easy to make salads where the lettuce and other veggies are already washed. These are easy, quick, healthy, and they taste good. The key is to choose vegetables that are rich in color.

3. **Buy fresh fruits** and do some research on how to tell when fruits are at their freshest and when they're in season. Limit your fruit serving to just two a day.

More Great Grocery Store Tips:

1. **Shop in a circle.** Many nutritionists will tell you to *shop the perimeter of the store.* Grocery stores are usually set up with their fresh foods, fruits, vegetables, fish, and breads all around the perimeter. Preservative-laced foods are in the center and at the ends of each aisle.

2. **Go alone.** Leave your children in good hands and go alone to the grocery store. This way you can concentrate on getting only the healthy foods you desire without being pressured into buying junk. Alternatively, if you do bring your children, be prepared to spend extra time teaching them how to spot healthy foods.

3. **Make a list!** This technique is a tried and true method to avoid buying foods that aren't healthy. *Stick to your list* and, for fun, seek out healthy foods you haven't tried before to tempt your taste buds.

With some determination and strategies in place, you *can* achieve your goal to eat healthy! By incorporating healthy changes into your diet one by one, you're slowly creating a new habit.

Before long, you'll be choosing healthy foods without a second thought, and those unhealthy foods you used to eat will no longer tempt you. Once you discover the benefits and better taste of fresh and healthy foods, you'll never want to go back!

Stay well,

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