

# Nutrition: we heard it's good for you

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**S**o, you made your New Year's resolution two-and-a-half months ago. You wanted to take some of those extra pounds off. Or maybe you wanted to have more energy and just feel better. You knew that it ultimately came down to the food you put into your mouth. But, for whatever reason, your resolution faded as fast as the hangover from New Year's Eve (or maybe a bit quicker).

If so, you're probably a bit down on yourself. Why couldn't you stick with that new diet? Didn't you have the willpower to make a positive change in your life? Couldn't you control what you ate? What's so hard about laying off the grease and going with the greens?

If you're thinking like that, well, there are a couple things to say. First off, you aren't alone.

Second, don't be so hard on yourself — eating well requires specific skills that you might still need to learn, practise and develop. And it's pretty hard to do on your own.

Health Services to the rescue. For four weeks, Linda Barton, nutritionist, Linda Brogden, nurse, and Kathy Winters, psychologist, jointly

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**“Imagine you've never heard the word diet.”**

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presented a series of seminars on eating for Energy. Here's some of the stuff that was talked about.

The seminars covered a number of aspects involved in developing healthy and consistent eating behaviour.

Nutritionally, areas of focus in-

cluded balance at all meals and snacks (protein, grains, fruits and veggies) as well as timing, fibre, and snacks.

Other important areas were understanding the process of change, setting goals, and dealing with and managing stress.

The first seminar started off with a vision: “Imagine you've never heard the word diet.” Profound words that have a profound impact. No diets. Ever. Just imagine.

The point was, your approach to eating should not be a diet, because diets don't work.

Restricting your food intake, restricting what you can and can't eat, becoming obsessive about what you eat, it doesn't work.

Instead, choose choice over control. There are no bad foods. There are good foods however. And good food combinations.

It all comes down to timing your

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## Setting SMART goals

To accomplish things, setting goals is an invaluable skill. Goals help to focus and motivate, as well as something to strive for and a way to measure success (or lack thereof). So, set goals and don't fear failure, just see success.

Make your goals Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic and Time related. Together, these five concepts can be labelled SMART goals.

For example, when setting your goals, first decide in what area you would like to set a goal. Would you like to work on eating a variety of different foods every day? Or maybe you need to work on planning your meals out better.

Once you've decided what area your goal is in, decide what stage you're at, and what type of goal you're looking at. Do you need to know more first? Or are you ready to make some change in behaviour? Is there some hurdle that is setting you back that you need to clear?

Say you've come to the conclusion you're at the action stage and are looking to have better eating patterns throughout the day. “I will have breakfast by 8:30 at least two times this week,” is a SMART goal.

It is specific, as opposed to, “I'm going to start eating breakfast.” It is measurable — two times this week.

It is action oriented, as opposed to feeling oriented (it's not, “I'm going to like eating breakfast”).

It is realistic, whereas, “I will eat breakfast every day this week,” might not be if you haven't been in the habit of eating breakfast at all previously.

And it is time related — before 8:30 in the morning.

Set SMART goals and you're setting yourself up for success.

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Vegetable sources of protein include soy beans, lentils, and other such things. Eggs are also a good source of protein.

For snacks, think easy and quick. Granola bars? Problem is, there isn't any protein. Go for the Power Bar type that offer the right balance.

## Metabolism depends on genetics, physical activity and eating habits/patterns.

The way each person metabolises their food is different, and as you reach and pass the age of 30, metabolism starts to slow down (about two per cent per decade). However, metabolism depends on genetics, physical activity and eating habits/patterns.

The key is to eat every three to four hours. That way your body has a constant, consistent stream of incoming fuel to use. That means that skipping breakfast, or lunch, or both, isn't a great idea.

And every time you eat, make sure you're taking in the right type of fuels. Follow the '1-2-3 Energy' strategy to ensure that you're doing a good job.

Eating in balance means eating fruits or vegetables, eating grains, and eating protein every time you sit down to eat.

The 1-2-3 strategy represents the energy burst each food gives you — one hour from fruits or vegetables, two hours worth from grains, and three hours from protein. And then it's time to eat again.

So, in order to keep eating so often, you've got to know what to eat in between meals. Snacks, or, in better words, 'mini-meals.' Remember, balance — 1-2-3.

Another quick snack solution that was provided was a power shake (see recipe).

Quick and easy is good for regular meals too. To save time, one idea is to cook large amounts of a dish, so that you can freeze and then re-heat the leftovers without spending all the time to cook it from scratch.

As well, spending one cooking evening a week to prepare multiple meals for the week, and then freezing them for later use, can concentrate the time spent in kitchen.

The seminar delivered many strategies that are helpful in dealing with possible roadblocks on your way to better eating habits.

One of these roadblocks can be too much stress. Behaviours, thoughts and feelings are the three components that combine to create stress.

Through the seminars the approach was to look at the actions and thoughts, with the idea that these will lead the feelings.

The two keys to creating positive thoughts were to develop a positive attitude and to work on relaxation techniques.

Become aware of your internal thinking. What messages do you unconsciously send yourself? Are they self-defeating? If so, get control over them.

If you notice yourself in negative thinking patterns, 'thought stop' — stop the thinking, calm yourself, and switch to a more positive thought. Instead of self-defeating thoughts, think self-encouragingly.

### Power Shake

- 1 cup low-fat milk (or soy beverage)
- 1 cup low-fat yogurt
- 1 banana
- 1/2 cup fresh or frozen berries
- 2 tbsps. wheat germ

Blend together and enjoy!  
(Makes three 1 cup servings.)

The hardest of the three to get is protein. Fruits and vegetables? You might not always choose them, but they're there. Grains? Everywhere you look. But protein?

Some choices are milk products — yogurt, milk (yes, even chocolate milk), and cheese are all good protein sources.

Meat is a possibility (not for everyone though), but it doesn't always make the best snack.

Nuts and seeds are good choices, including peanut and other nut butters, but this group can be high in fat.

To relax, the participants were taken through some breathing exercises to learn to breathe from the diaphragm. Try it right now.

Sit comfortably in a quiet location. Breathe in and think 'calm.' Breathe out and think 'relax.' Breathe smoothly at your normal pace and depth. Repeat to become more calm and relaxed.

Now place one hand on your chest and one on your diaphragm (just above the belly button). You

want to breathe from your diaphragm, so hopefully that hand is moving and your chest hand isn't as much. If not, then you're likely breathing shallowly.

Managing stress was just one of the many skills learned through these seminars. Acquiring new skills is essential if you want to improve your eating. So is the desire to change.

Ask yourself these two questions that were posed to the seminar participants. "How important is it to

me?" and "How will it make me feel afterwards?"

If it is important, and it will make a difference, what's holding you back?

By popular request, Health Services is hosting another nutrition/lifestyle seminar this Wednesday, March 21. It will run from 4:30 to 6:30 in the new meeting room at Health Services.

All students are welcome. The event is free, and there will be complimentary refreshments available.