

Different Strokes For Different Folks by Mike DeCinti

Within the last few days I've seen a story on the news about eating healthy for a dollar a day, and a friend of mine has told me about a new diet that's making its way around the country. So obviously, both of them got me thinking about nutrition, which is perfect because March is National Nutrition Month, sponsored by the American Dietetic Association.

First, the news story simply dealt with the myth that you can not eat healthy without spending a lot of money. A woman named Rebecca Currie from North Carolina simply bought food in bulk, all of it healthy, and by planning meals out ahead of time, she was able to fix herself breakfast, lunch and dinner everyday for a month at a cost of only a dollar a day. She lost weight, lowered her cholesterol and felt healthier by the end of her experiment. However she does admit that she also felt a bit tired and run down. But remember her point was to take this theory to the extreme. You and I can easily use her method, spend a few more dollars per day, and still eat healthy on a budget.

A few days later a friend of mine, who is very healthy to start with, told me that her and her husband were going to follow this new 28 day diet called the Engine 2 Diet. A triathlete and firefighter named Rip Esselstyne who wanted to help his fellow firefighters get healthy and lower their cholesterol created it. It is a vegan diet. Which is simply a vegetarian who also does not eat any meat or dairy. So as you might guess, any diet that consists of whole grains, vegetables, fruits and tofu (to name a few) is going to be healthy.

Now to a majority of people, both of these may be considered difficult to follow, and I would agree. You have to have strong willpower and a good understanding of proper nutrition, and your body, for these to work. So let's just talk about eating healthy. Notice I didn't say diet. Diets don't work, that's why they're called fads. There will be no diets discussed here. Instead make the choice to start eating healthier, but use the lessons from the two examples above. Buy healthy foods in bulk to save money, plan out your meals, and eat more vegetables, grains, beans and other smart choices instead of filling up on processed foods. Here are a few more suggestions.

- Drink lots of water. You should be drinking water like it's your job. The first thing you should do in the morning as soon as you get up, is to chug a cold glass of water. I'm not kidding. Your body went without water for 6 to 8 hours, you are dehydrated. Then continue to drink it all day long. Try to get a minimum of eight to ten 8oz glasses a day.
- Watch your portions. Have you noticed that portion sizes have become as obese as we have? Think about that last time you had some pasta. Did it fill up the plate? Probably. Well then it's way too much. A good size portion should be about the size of a deck of cards or your clinched fist.

- Eat less more often. Instead of the average of two to three large meals a day, you should be grazing on good food all day long. Try to eat five to six “smaller” meals every day. Spread them out 3 to 4 hours apart, try to include a lean protein, a healthy carbohydrate (yes, they exist) and some vegetables. And no, you don’t get dessert after each meal.
- Finally, some old standards that still hold true. Try to limit, if not eliminate your consumption of fried foods. Eat more fruits and vegetables, and whenever possible eat those vegetables raw. If you think a food is bad for you, you’re probably right. And remember, you can have that cookie or ice cream; just have it less often and eat less of it. Treat yourself to it as a reward for eating healthy all week, not as a substitute for dinner.

For more information on National Nutrition Month and eating healthier, visit www.eatright.org.

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