



## Healthy Dieting

There is nothing like the start of a New Year to turn our thoughts towards dieting. Or does it have more to do with the fact that we just ate our way through the holidays? If you feel inclined to lose a few pounds, do it in a healthy way. To lose weight, you do need to eat less, but some approaches are more healthy than others.

A good starting point is to reduce your usual calorie intake by 500 – 1000 calories. One pound of fat is approximately 3500 calories, so a reduction of 500 calories a day adds up to 3500 calories over the week. In theory this should drop your weight by one pound a week.



Small women who already eat lightly may need to aim for even smaller reductions – like 100 – 250 calories per day. Weight loss is slower, but more sustainable if you set goals you can live with.

To trim those calories out of your diet, look first to the “extras.” Avoid between meal grazing, except what is needed to keep you from getting too hungry by the next meal. When there is more than 3-5 hours between meals, have a “planned snack.” This means deciding ahead of time when and what your snack will be—which is distinctly different than opening the refrigerator and seeing what looks good!

Keep your meals “right sized.” You can cut back on added fats, seconds and super-sized portions, but don’t try to skip meals or eat *too* little. Meals usually provide the most nutritious foods we eat and overly light meals can lead to cravings and less nutritious snacking later.

Another component of a well-balanced approach is moderation Dial in your expectations to a way of eating that you can sustain over time. It is fine to be extra vigilant for a week or two, but ultimately you need something you can live with.

High calorie, high fat foods like sweets, desserts and most snack foods are tricky. Make conscious choices and enjoy it when you decide to eat them. Forbidding foods makes them more attractive; it is better to include these foods at a less frequent rate. This deflates their ability to grab you.

Many people will lose weight just by cutting down on the extras and paying attention. If that doesn’t work, try counting calories for a while and/or keeping a food journal. There is value even in doing this for a short time; it allows you to see where your calories come from and exactly how it all adds up.

While it is wise to have an awareness of calories, keep in mind that low calorie doesn’t necessarily mean healthy. For instance, many diet desserts are low calorie, but filled with

ingredients that are hard to pronounce. They also can lure you into thinking of them as a free food; even with 30 calories, multiple servings add up. Lower calorie breads are often less healthy than the best whole grain breads: choose predominately real foods and adjust portion sizes.

What about the diet programs? Whether a diet controls your calorie intake or eliminates groups of foods, it is generally based on getting you to eat less. I’ve had many clients who lost weight on a variety of programs (Weight Watchers is the most popular), but then regain that weight and more as they go off the diet. It’s not that diets can’t help you— but what are you going to eat when the diet is over? You can be diligent and power your way through a diet for awhile, but it is hard to sustain if it is not also enjoyable. Going on and off diets changes body composition and makes it harder to maintain a healthy weight over time.

What if nothing works? I’ve seen people make significant changes in their eating habits and reduce calories, and still not lose weight. I really think there are other factors. Body chemistry, inflammation, and gut bacteria are all being studied for the role they play in weight control. Weight loss is much harder for some people than others – and it has nothing to do with motivation or self control. The bottom line is that a healthy way of eating will be the healthiest for you at any weight! Just how healthy is your diet?

Keep in mind that exercise and mindful eating also play an important role in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. My new CD on Mindful Eating is scheduled to come out next month, and I’ll write more on that topic next time.

Happy New Year!

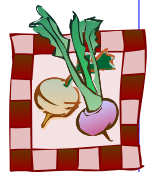
## Recipes for the Month

[Healthy Broccoli Salad](#)

[Julienne Root Vegetable Salad](#)

[Beet and Grapefruit Salad](#)

Click the links to the recipe, or find them on my blog at [www.HealthyHabitsCoach.wordpress.com](http://www.HealthyHabitsCoach.wordpress.com).



### Want help setting up your healthy diet?

Would you like to evaluate just how healthy your diet is and what you can do for sustainable weight control? Contact me at 707 431-7524 or [kathy@HealthyHabitsCoach.com](mailto:kathy@HealthyHabitsCoach.com)

### Kathy Nichols: Life Coach & Registered Dietitian

Are you ready to stop dieting and looking for a way of eating that is sustainable, enjoyable and healthy?

*Discover Wellness from the Inside Out!*

