

MINUTE NUTRITION NEWS

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Why Is Making Lifestyle Change So Hard?

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“I know what I should be eating, but I just can’t get motivated to do it!” Does this sound like you? Many people want to make healthier lifestyle changes, but find it difficult to get started. Why is this? It might be more complicated than you think.

We Eat For More Than Nourishment

If eating decisions were based solely on what we *should* be eating, then life might be a whole lot easier (and more boring). Unfortunately, that could not be further from the truth. In reality, there are multiple forces – visible and hidden – that drive us to eat and affect the ultimate decisions on our food choices.

Think about all the reasons why we eat – to satisfy hunger of course, but also to celebrate, to seek comfort and pleasure, to cope with difficult situations or feelings, to reward, to satisfy cravings and “just because” – just because the food smells good, just because you walked by the sample station, just because someone offered food, just because there’s a little bit left on the plate, and so on. Other factors affect our decision of what we actually end up eating – cost, time, convenience, food preference, and perhaps cooking skills and your knowledge about nutrition. In today’s society, the environment and our busy lifestyles can

make it really difficult for us to make a healthy lifestyle choice that satisfies the real reason to our eating. What ends up happening is we eat on auto-pilot mode in face of certain situations even when we may not be hungry and why, sometimes we don’t even know how much we’ve eaten until all the food is gone!

Now some of us might try to change these behaviours by following a diet. However, these efforts tend to be short-lived because of a couple reasons. One, these diets only target the hunger factor of why we eat (and sometimes they fail to do even this), but completely miss the boat on helping us manage all the other reasons and factors that affect our food intake. For instance, if you truly love eating pasta and it is not allowed in the diet plan, how can this possibly be implemented for the rest of your life? Two, when we try to make changes that are too extreme, our body sends out counteractive hormones to actually increase our desire to eat. We end up thinking our lack of will power has failed us to change, when in reality, we might have set ourselves up for a losing battle against our own body in the first place.

So What Can Be Done?

Start with a non-judgmental and non-dieting mindset. Be mindful and explore your current habits to find out where you are starting out from. Then start with a realistic change. A useful tool to help with this is to ask yourself the question “Am I hungry?” every time you eat. If yes, then honour your hunger and eat. If not, then think about what is driving your desire to eat and whether there are other things you can do to settle this trigger. For example, are you eating because you are bored? If so, does eating truly satisfy your boredom or do you find yourself still feeling bored after you are done eating? What else can you do besides eating to satisfy your boredom? Seeing a Registered Dietitian can help guide you through this type of mindfulness practice and help you discover more enjoyable and realistic ways to live a healthier lifestyle.



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

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Lentil Spaghetti Sauce

A simple spaghetti sauce that is easy enough to make but packs a nutritional punch just by the easy substitution of ground beef to lentils. Lentils are a leaner type of protein that is also an excellent source of fibre. You can use this in any recipe in so many ways – with spaghetti or lasagna, with low carb substitutions like spaghetti squash or zucchini ribbons, or as a topping in a small sub or on a pizza.



Makes 2 cups

Ingredients:

1 tbsp.	Extra virgin olive oil
½	Large onion, diced
1	Celery stalk, diced
1	Garlic clove, minced
½ cup	Dried split red lentils, rinsed
1 cup	No salt added beef broth
½	Can (156mL can) tomato paste
½ cup	Water
2 tbsp.	Italian parsley, chopped
¼ tsp	Dried oregano
1/8 tsp	Salt
2 pinches	Cayenne pepper

Directions:

1. In a large saucepan, heat oil over medium high heat. Add onions and celery and cook for a few minutes until tender. Add garlic and cook for another minute.
2. Add lentils and beef broth. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce to low heat and cook for about 10 minutes.
3. Add tomato paste, water, parsley, oregano, salt and cayenne pepper. Cover and bring to a simmer over medium high heat. Reduce to low heat and cook for 15-20 minutes until lentils are very soft.
4. Serve with pasta or other recipe.

Adapted from <http://www.cookspiration.com/recipe.aspx?perma=04C11866BD4&d=44&i=3&s=2>

Nutrition information (Per ½ cup):

150 calories, Carbohydrate 22 g (8% DV), Fibre 4 g (14% DV), Sugars 3 g (5% DV), Protein 8 g, Sodium 130 mg (6% DV), Calcium 2% DV, Iron 10% DV, Potassium 10% DV