

NEWS RELEASE

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Weight Loss Benefits of Eating Your Veggies

You already know that fruits and vegetables provide you with vitamins, minerals, plant chemicals, and fiber your body needs to function properly and stay healthy. Research studies have also shown that eating a diet containing plenty of fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of some cancers, heart disease and other chronic health problems.

Even more news tells us that substituting fruits and vegetables for more energy-dense food can help people lose and/or maintain a lower weight. Now if that's not a good enough reason to shop weekly at the Berthoud Farmers' Market, every Thursday from 3-7 at the corner of Mountain and 3rd, then we don't know what is.

Vegetables are low in fat and calories, a good source of dietary fiber and provide us with extra energy. All these features help control weight effectively. Being low in calories enables us to eat lots of vegetables without consuming excess energy, and the high fiber content helps fill the stomach faster limiting the total amount of food consumed.

The presence of many vitamins and other chemicals in vegetables supply the body with nutrients necessary to boost energy production within the muscle cells. This gives us a natural feeling of vitality and the energy to become more active helping to burn more energy each day.

Vegetables are also low in sodium so they help reduce water gains. Sodium is present in virtually all processed foods, and it causes the body to hold water within the interstitial areas of the body. It has been estimated that many average people may be holding up to 5 pounds of additional water caused from a high intake of sodium. Any reduction in sodium intake will help lose water weight, and if we eat more vegetables, our sodium intake naturally lowers.

Here are some simple suggestions from the Centers for Disease Control for cutting calories by eating fruits and vegetables instead of more calorie-dense foods.

Breakfast

- Substitute green peppers, onions, or mushrooms for one of the eggs or half the cheese in your omelet. The vegetables will add volume and flavor to the dish with fewer calories than the egg or cheese.
- Cut back on the amount of cereal in your bowl to make room for sliced bananas, fresh peaches or strawberries. The benefits - same sized bowl with fewer calories and more flavors.

Lunch

- Substitute vegetables such as lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, grated carrots or onions for half to three-fourths of the meat and cheese in your sandwich, wrap or burrito. The new version will still fill you up but with fewer calories than the original.
- Choose a vegetable-based soup rather than a meat or noodle-based one. If you're making your own soup, add twice the chopped vegetables called for and half the meat or noodles. The vegetables will help fill you up, so you won't miss those extra calories.
- Choose an apple, orange or carrot sticks to go with your sandwich instead of chips or cookies.

Dinner

- Add 1 cup chopped vegetables such as broccoli, tomatoes, squash, or peppers while removing 1 cup of the rice or pasta in your favorite dish. The dish with the vegetables will be just as satisfying but have fewer calories than the original version.
- Take a good look at your dinner plate. Vegetables, fruit, and whole grains should take up half your plate. If they don't, replace some of the meat, cheese, white pasta, or rice with legumes, steamed broccoli, asparagus, greens, or another favorite vegetable. This will reduce the total calories in your meal without reducing the amount of food you eat.

Snacks

- Fruits and vegetables make wonderful low-calorie yet filling snacks. For example, a medium-size apple, a medium-size banana or 1 cup of carrots, broccoli or bell peppers with 2 tablespoons of hummus all contain 100 calories or less.
- Instead of a high-calorie snack from a vending machine, bring cut-up vegetables or fruit from home. One snack-sized bag of corn chips (1 ounce) has the same number of calories as a small apple, 1 cup of whole strawberries, AND 1 cup of carrots with a quarter-cup of low-calorie dip.

At the Berthoud Farmers' Market this week are summer squash, tomatoes, onions, cucumbers, green beans, cabbage, peppers, lettuce, corn, basil, dill, and fresh fruit. To round out your diet you can also find crisp natural crackers, cheese spreads, fresh-baked loaves of bread, and hot kettle corn. In addition, the market offers tomato choka (similar to salsa only thicker), fresh batches of barbeque sauce, natural beef, a variety of mushrooms, frozen salt water fish and shellfish, emu products and soap, beaded flowers, vibrant table linens, and vitamin supplements.

Berthoud non-profit organizations, community growers, or artisans within the town and county who wish to sell either home grown produce or home made crafts may attend the market twice during the season at no charge.

A volunteer-driven, weight-losing, non-profit organization, The Berthoud Main Street Program encourages the community to volunteer with its many upcoming activities and events. For questions, please contact Eric Boyd at 532-5199. Visit the Berthoud Main Street Program website at www.berthoudmainstreet.org.