

# THE URBANHERBALIST

## NUTRITION TIP SHEET: UNDERSTANDING YOUR CALORIC INTAKE



### **What are calories?**

A calorie is defined as “a unit of heat used to indicate the amount of energy that foods will produce in the body.” Calories are “fuel” for your body! They provide the energy needed to live your life.

### **What causes weight gain?**

The amount of calories or fuel you eat should benefit the energy you need in your daily life. If you eat more calories than you need or use then the excess energy (fuel) gets stored as fat. All calories are NOT created equal! Rather than choose foods based on the number of calories it contains, choose high quality, healthy foods (vegetables, fruit, beans/legumes, low-fat lean meats and healthy oils) and minimize low quality food choices (snack foods, soda, juice, white flour, fried foods and saturated fats).

### **How can I manage my caloric intake?**

1. Begin to track your caloric intake using the online resource SuperTracker (link: <https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/default.aspx> )

For one week, document everything you eat using the SuperTracker. At the end of the week (7 days) establish your average daily caloric intake. Once you have an idea of how many calories you eat daily, set a goal to cut your daily calories by 25%. For example, if you find you are eating 3000 calories/daily, 25% less would set your goal at 2250 (750 less calories per day).

2. Strive to eat foods that match the My Plate sample:



Remember that the GRAINS section can lead to more calories than you think because most carbohydrates metabolize into sugar. NOTE: fruit juice does not fully

count as a “fruit”. Juice is concentrated sugar. Whole fruit will provide you with a good source of fiber as well as the vitamins and mineral content.

If you must dine out for lunch, choose fast food restaurants that have low calorie meals. For example, Panera Bread has “lite” choices on their menu. Eating at McDonald’s- try one of their Wrap sandwiches rather than the burger.

Smoothies are wonderful tasting ways to get more vegetables and fruits in your diet. Here’s a link to Smoothie Recipes:

<http://allrecipes.com/recipes/drinks/smoothies/>

3. Begin to add a daily multi-vitamin into your diet. Take a daily multi-vitamin until you change your diet by adding more vegetables and fruits.

4. Drink more water. Water will support your kidneys and “fill” you up! If you think you are hungry, drink a glass of water first.

Strive to drink 40 ounces daily- but not at one time! 10 ounces 4 times daily is a good plan.

First thing in the morning, drink 10 ounces of water with ½ of fresh lemon juice squeezed to jump-start your digestion.

Non-caffeinated herbal tea counts as water, but not juice or soda or flavored water like Vitamin water, etc.

5. Join an exercise class! Exercising with family and friends will help you stay with it!

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Here’s a link to review the new publication: *Healthy Weight, Healthy You: achieving your ideal weight by exploring the mind-body connection to weight loss.*

<http://urbanherbalist.org/custom4.html>

It is easy to read and has some good ideas to support your weight loss goals.

#### NEXT STEPS

After tracking your calories for one week, established a daily calorie goal. Then, schedule a follow-up appointment for assistance in developing menu strategies and eating suggestions that will support you for the first 30-days of your new diet.