

## ***“March” into Health***

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March is nutrition awareness month! How aware are you of what you are putting in your body? It’s amazing to me that with the time and care we take to make sure that our automobiles are well serviced, our electronics are the latest and greatest, and even our pets are well fed; for some reason we take only a fraction of our time to focus on our bodies. We are sure to take care of everything that encompasses our lives and continue to neglect our most precious gift, our health. This is the only body we get so why aren’t we taking care of it?

According to the USDA the average American consumes 150 to 170 pounds of sugar per year. As the Center for Disease Control reports, 11% of the American diet comes from fast food! One-third of the US, 78.6 million Americans, is obese while another one-third is overweight! This puts two-thirds of our population at risk for disease! Despite all of this, we make very little effort to change our approach to nutrition when the payoff would be life changing!

If that is not enough consider this, approximately 735,000 people have a heart attack each year and 610,000 people die from heart disease, one of every four deaths. Lastly, 29.1 million Americans have diabetes, a condition that can often be controlled with a proper diet. Take action, don’t become a statistic!

Small changes to your diet can result in weight loss, lowering blood pressure, lowering cholesterol levels, reducing heart disease, and even curing type-two diabetes! Making even small changes can at times feel overwhelming. I am not suggesting that you eliminate all of your guilty pleasures; however small changes can elicit great results. Why not use March, nutritional awareness month to make those small changes and get started on a new and healthier you?

### **I challenge you to make the following changes:**

**Beverages:** Alternate a bottle of water for every other beverage you drink. If you have a hard time drinking just water there are great alternatives like flavored seltzer water available. The idea is to increase your water consumption. Water, after all is an essential part of a healthy body.

**Sugar:** Read your labels, eating products with only 6 grams of sugar or less per serving. Try replacing refined processed sugar filled snacks with fruits or vegetables. You will be pleasantly surprised at how sweet a piece of fruit is when you are not eating refined sugar.

Eating Out: Don't be shy! Ask for what your body needs! Choose healthy lean proteins, skip the sauces! Ask for steamed vegetables and don't be afraid to replace unhealthy food choices (i.e. French fries) with more vegetables.

Alcohol: Everything in moderation! When choosing a drink stick to clear alcohol. If it has an umbrella, chances are it is not your best choice. Wine is proven to have many health benefits, but remember this is based on 1-2 glasses daily, not the whole bottle!

Make these small changes simply by adding good, healthy food to your current diet, and eventually you will crowd out the junk food! You will be amazed at how much better you will look and feel!

You have nothing to lose and your health to gain!

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