Have you ever tried losing weight with fad diets such as the Atkins or South Beach diets? Do you ever wonder why the results don’t seem to last? Most people are well aware of the fact that diets don’t work over the long-term, but not many people understand why.

**Basal Metabolic Rate:** Your basal metabolic rate (BMR) is the amount of energy (measured in calories) that your body needs in order for your organs and body systems to work properly. For example, your lungs need energy to breathe and your heart needs energy to pump blood. Your lean tissue (e.g. muscle) has the largest impact on your BMR. When you restrict your calorie intake by dieting and eating less than your BMR, your body is forced to use its’ stored energy sources. Your lean body mass, and therefore your muscle, becomes a source of energy. Breaking down muscle reduces your body’s lean tissue. Furthermore, your metabolism slows down because your body attempts to conserve energy. Many people think they are losing fat while dieting, when in reality, they are also losing lean tissue and muscle. Long term, dieting reduces your metabolism and you may end up in the “yo-yo dieting” weight cycle!

**How do you achieve a healthy weight?**

In order to effectively change your weight, you need to prevent your BMR from decreasing. This is where exercise comes into play. Exercise will stimulate fat breakdown for energy and increase your muscle mass. Muscle has a higher metabolic rate than fat so exercise will increase your BMR by increasing your muscle mass and reducing your fat mass. With increased exercise and modestly reduced calorie intake, you will get the results you want—for lifelong changes!

**DID YOU KNOW?**

30 minutes of brisk walking burns 150 calories!

If you follow Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide in addition to the recommended exercise levels, you may be able to lose weight in a healthy manner (lose no more than 2 lbs a week!).

Tips for Achieving (and Maintaining) a Healthy Weight

**Low-Intensity Exercise.** Although a high-intensity workout may seem like the best way to blast body fat, it is not the case. High-intensity exercise burns mainly carbohydrates for energy, while low intensity exercise burns more calories from fat. So if your goal is to blast fat away, stick to lower-intensity exercises. Low-intensity exercises include activities that maintain your heart rate at about 60-65% of your maximum. So go for an energetic walk, a light jog or a leisurely bike ride.

**Sleep, sleep, sleep!** The amount of sleep you get can influence the production of the hormone leptin. Leptin plays a key role in regulating our appetite. Specifically, leptin has been found to act as an appetite suppressant. Lack of sleep can lead to a reduction in leptin levels; our appetites may increase and we may tend to overeat. Sufficient sleep is increasingly being recognized as an essential aspect of chronic disease prevention and health promotion. Adults should aim for 7-9 hrs.

**Eat every 3-4 hours.** Skipping meals will actually impair your weight management goals. When you skip meals, your body goes into “starvation mode”, plus you are more likely to overeat at your next meal. If you know you’ll be busy, plan ahead. Prioritize your meals and pack a snack.

**Control your portions.** Serve yourself less, savour your meals and eat more slowly. Wait a while before you decide to go for seconds. It actually takes approximately 20 minutes for your brain to realize that the stomach is full.

**Eat your fibre!** Studies have shown that eating foods high in fiber help you feel full sooner and for a longer period of time. Foods high in fiber include whole grains such as barley, oats, and brown rice; dried fruits and berries; dark leafy greens; and legumes such as lentils, chickpeas and beans.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Chewing your food for longer makes it easier for your body to digest and absorb more nutrients.
Oatmeal with flaxseed, blueberries & almonds

Overview

For all of you ‘breakfast skippers’ and those of you who want a change, here is a breakfast that is full of fiber and healthy nutrients to give you energy and keep you full for longer! One cup of oatmeal gives you two Canada’s Food Guide servings of whole grain products. You can add your own flare by picking any toppings you want for the added benefit of antioxidants, vitamins, protein, or omega-3 fatty acids.

Ingredients

• 3 c of fluids: cold water/milk
• 1 1/2 c. quick-cook rolled oats
• 1/4 tsp. salt
• 1/4 c. chopped almonds
• Blueberries
• Flax seeds
• Any other fruits/nuts/seeds

Directions (serves 4)

1. Combine oats, salt, and any seeds, nuts, spices, or fruits (blueberries, almonds, salt, oats, and flax seed in this case). Set aside.


3. Cook until oats have absorbed the liquid. Depending on desired consistency, cooking time will vary. Remove from heat and let stand for 1-2 mins.

Note: Some fruits will release more water than others. So depending on what you add, you may have to decrease the amount of liquid.

Nutritional Benefits

• Oats are high in fiber (45% insoluble fiber and 55% soluble fiber).
• Oats contain more protein, calcium, iron, magnesium, zinc, copper, manganese, thiamin, folate and vitamin E than barley, corn, wheat or rice.
• Oats are low in fat!

Nutrient Info

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