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SPOTLIGHT

Resources available for eating better, quitting smoking in 2019

By JADE MCDOWELL East Oregonian Jan 10, 2019 0



A young boy stirs chicken and pear salad Thursday during Hermiston Head Start's healthy cooking class. Staff photo by Kathy Aney

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Less than two weeks into January, it's a good bet that some New Year's resolutions have already fallen by the wayside.

The good news is, when it comes to goals around healthy eating, experts say the best way to tackle the problem is by incremental changes.

"People try and change everything at once, and that's not realistic," said Angie Treadwell, a registered dietician. "Set small goals you think you can accomplish and then when you accomplish them move on to the next goal."

On Thursday Treadwell was teaching healthy cooking classes at the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) office in Hermiston. Participants in the program get to take home a supply of produce to try the recipes they learned at home.

Treadwell said just about everyone needs to eat more fruits and vegetables than they are currently eating, so that's one of the best places to start when it comes to dietary goal-setting.

People should eat as many colors of plants as they can, she said, to get a good variety of vitamins and minerals. Mixing it up also helps people stick to their goal to eat more vegetables instead of getting bored and falling back into old patterns.

"There are a ton of fruits and vegetables out there, so don't make yourself eat something you hate," she said.

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She encouraged people to not only experiment with new fruits and vegetables they haven't tried before, but also to find new ways to cook them. Instead of just heating up vegetables in the microwave, for example, Treadwell teaches people how to bring out the best flavors by roasting them with a little olive oil and the right spices.

It also helps to recognize the source of temptations, such as boredom or the fact that Americans tend to celebrate holidays and milestones with unhealthy food.

"Why not celebrate with an activity instead?" she said. "Go for a hike, or go to a trampoline park."

While people tend to think of healthy eating in terms of weight loss goals, Christine Guenther, dietician manager at St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton, said everyone had different needs for improving their health. A skinny person might actually be malnourished due to an illness, for example, and need help gaining weight in a healthy way. And people of various weights can have problems with diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure or other ailments affected by diet.

She said one problem people have with setting eating-related goals is all of the conflicting advice out there.

"People will come to me and say, 'I just don't know what to do. The internet isn't helping; every time I read something it's different,'" she said.

Guenther and other dietitians help people learn moderation and scientifically-sound ways to eat healthier, looking to longterm health benefits like more energy instead of just temporary weight loss. She said while most people usually know they should be cutting back on things like desserts and soda, one thing she often has to teach people is how to get protein and fats from the right sources — olive oil and lean chicken, for example, instead of bacon and sausage.

Guenther said the time of day people eat is important as well. Many people make the mistake of skipping breakfast or lunch every day, leading them to overeat unhealthy foods later or snack after dinner.

"Eat more earlier in the day and less in the evening," she said.

Both Guenther and Treadwell said planning ahead is an important part of eating healthy. Diets fall apart when there aren't healthy ingredients around the house or meal prep for days when there isn't time to cook.

"If someone wants to work on increasing their vegetable intake, for example, they need to come up with a plan," Guenther said. "How are they going to do that? If they say, 'I'm going to eat this much,' how does that fit into their day? Will it be snacks? Or with dinner?"

For people planning to increase or decrease certain foods in their diets, there are plenty of resources. Oregon State University's Food Hero website, for example, features a large collection of healthy recipes searchable by ingredient. And Good Shepherd Health Care System in Hermiston just put together a new cookbook called "Shepherd's Pie."

Kathy Thomas, wellness coordinator for Good Shepherd, said the cookbook's recipes were submitted by staff and reviewed by the hospital's wellness committee and a registered dietician to make sure each recipe selected was healthy, practical for a family on a budget and passed "the delicious taste test."

The cookbook is dedicated to Jared Bowling, who was Good Shepherd's head chef and nutrition services manager for more than 10 years before his death. Thomas said the first order, selling at \$15 apiece, is almost sold out. The money goes toward the Agape House's backpack program to send food home on the weekend with school children who might otherwise go hungry.

Good Shepherd also offers a variety of classes and one-on-one options around healthy eating. They can be found at <http://www.gshealth.org/classes-events>.

Quitting smoking

As some people try cutting back on foods that are harmful to their body, others are focusing on quitting another harmful substance: tobacco.

Dr. Tom Jeanne, deputy health officer for the Oregon Health Authority, said the OHA does see a spike in calls to its quit line this time of year. The department is taking advantage of resolution season to run advertisements reminding people that the state has resources to help them quit smoking. They can call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) 24 hours a day or visit www.quitnow.net/oregon for guidance.

“In Oregon we know nearly three out of four people who smoke want to quit,” he said.

Many of them have tried before but relapsed. Nicotine is “highly addictive,” Jeanne said, and those trying to quit can easily be triggered by smelling cigarette smoke or seeing someone else using.

There is hope, he said, even for people who have tried and failed to quit in the past. Millions of people have quit eventually.

Jeanne said some people do manage to power through on their own, but using a combination of counseling and FDA-approved products such as nicotine patches doubles a person’s chances of quitting permanently. Tobacco cessation tools are covered by all health insurance providers in Oregon.

“They really do raise people’s chances of quitting for good,” he said.

Health care providers are also a “key resource,” Jeanne said. It is important for people trying to quit to talk to their doctor, who can give them advice about what options will work best and help them make a quit plan.

Smoking kills 8,000 Oregonians a year and worsens chronic diseases in many more. Jeanne said the benefits of quitting are longterm, but also immediate: After 12 hours, a smoker’s carbon monoxide levels go down to the level of a nonsmoker’s, and after just one year their risk of coronary heart disease is cut in half.



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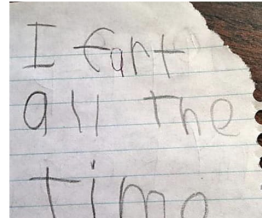
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