



Weekly Tip:

How do you eat an elephant?

One bite at a time.

How do you stick to a healthy lifestyle?

One day at a time.

Anyone can avoid treats and snacks and eat their vegetables for just one day. Anyone can do almost anything for just one day.

If you find that you just can't stick to anything, can't make a plan work for you, or get overwhelmed—try changing the way you think about it.

You don't have to avoid chocolate cake for the rest of your life—but can you do it for today? You don't have to live on carrot sticks, but can you have them for a snack—just for today?

If all you do is focus on making the best and the healthiest choices today, tomorrow will take care of itself!

Probiotics - help or hype?

It is almost impossible to turn on the TV or open a newspaper or magazine lately without seeing an advertisement for the newest pill, food or shake that is 'packed with probiotics' but are they really a necessary supplement or are they the newest advertisement hype?

Probiotic is a termed use to refer to a living micro-organism (usually bacteria) that provides some benefit to its host in large enough quantities. That's it. The name itself does not refer to any specific bacteria or benefit. So the question is, without knowing what they are and what they do, how do you know whether or not you should buy the product being advertised? Even more importantly, do we need them at all?

Well the answer is—yes, and no. We do need probiotics, in fact we already have them. Our bodies are full of micro-organisms, some that are beneficial (probiotics). Some that are inert (don't do anything) and some that can actually be harmful. Whether we like them or not, microorganisms are a part of us and always will be.

So do we need more than what we have? Maybe. There are some instances where the natural balance of bacteria in our bodies can become unbalanced. If you are fighting an infection and taking long-term or even high-dose antibiotics, you may actually destroy the good along with the bad.

Health issues like Crohn's Disease, Colitis or Irritable Bowel Syndrome can also adversely affect the bacterial balance of our bodies but if you are suffering from any of these diseases, you should consult a doctor or a dietician before consuming any large amounts of products with probiotics as they could interfere with medications.

If your regular diet consists mostly of packaged, frozen and processed foods, your bacteria levels may also be out of balance as the preservative methods and chemicals used may actually prevent good bacteria from entering your body with the consumption of these types of foods.

For the majority of us who try to eat healthy, balanced diets including fresh and raw foods supplements or specialty food with extra probiotics aren't really necessary and like anything else, can actually be harmful if over-consumed. Again, probiotics are all about balance. Our bodies need both good and bad bacteria and when the natural balance is disrupted, the results can be unhealthy.

Most symptoms of an unhealthy balance of bacteria can be found digestively. Cramps, gas, nausea, diarrhea, constipation—these can be symptoms of an unbalanced colon. Most of us 'know' what our problem is. Either we have been eating too much high-fat, processed foods or even too many raw, 'ruffage' type foods.

We can usually find the balance we need ourselves, just by modifying what we consume. Look at the Canada Food Guide for support on choosing the right amounts and the right type of foods. It won't take long to start feeling 'right' again.

Do you need to pay extra for the packages that advertise 'probiotics' or special supplements—NO! NO! NO! It is another way that the marketing giants are trying to attract your dollars by convincing you that you need them—and you don't! There are so many foods that are naturally high in probiotics that if you do want to choose to increase your intake of them, you just have to make a few different choices and you certainly don't have to pay extra!

No matter what the commercials say... ALL yogurt has probiotics. Beneficial bacteria is what makes yogurt, yogurt—so stick to the low-fat, low sugar brands you love and don't worry about the new 'healthier varieties'. Buttermilk although high is also another choice from the dairy aisle. Leafy green vegetables like spinach and kale are excellent choices, as are many different types of nuts, seeds and whole grains. You get the benefits of probiotics, just by following the food guide and making healthy, balanced choices, without paying a cent extra!

Probiotic and digestive healthy is just like any other body system, it is all about balance. Health, not hype!

Recipe Corner

Delicious and nutritious snack and meal ideas that are perfect for the whole family!
Straight from Michelle's kitchen!



Michelle's Blog:

www.butterflyconsultations.com/blog

Mac-N-Cheese

The #1 recipe request I receive is for a healthy mac-n-cheese and no matter how hard I try, I just can't do it. There is no way to make a healthy version of this family favorite and still maintain the creaminess and flavor we have come to expect. This recipe is NOT healthy, but it is HEALTHIER than most—especially when only offered as a side dish and not a course unto itself!

Cook 8oz of dry whole wheat elbow macaroni until tender, drain and set aside. Shred 40z of cheddar cheese, set aside. Puree 1 1/2 cups cottage cheese in a blender or food processor until smooth, also set aside. Mix 3tbsp bread crumbs and 3tbsp parmesan cheese with 1tsp olive oil and set aside.

In a saucepan, heat 1 cup of skim milk until steaming, take out 2tbsp and whisk it together with 1tbsp of whole wheat flour until smooth then whisk into remaining milk. Stir and heat until mixture boils and thickens—remove from heat.

Stir cheddar cheese, 2tsp Dijon mustard, 1/4 tsp black pepper and 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper into milk mixture, stirring until cheese is melted and smooth. Add cottage cheese and stir again until smooth. Add macaroni.

Pour into a baking dish and cover with bread crumb mixture. Bake uncovered for about 40 minutes at 375°F or until cheese is browned and bubbling. Let cool and serve.

Baby Fat

Have you ever heard someone complain about their 'baby fat' and how hard it is to lose? Did you know that there really is no such thing as baby fat and what they are really referring to is extra weight that they gained during pregnancy and perhaps the loss of muscle tone in their abdomen that adds to that 'saggy' look in the belly.

So how do you get back in shape after baby? Well the easiest thing to do is to not gain more than you need to begin with. During pregnancy, a woman only needs an extra 300 calories per day and if it is well balanced, excessive weight gain should not be an issue. Most women should not gain more than 30lbs, even less if they are overweight to begin with—don't forget that as long as you are medically cleared to do so, there is no reason to stop being physically active during this time—including abdominal exercises. It is good for you and for baby and regular exercise will even help you have an easier delivery!

If you do find that you have gained more than you wanted to or that you need to tighten up what your baby has loosened, you can start an exercise regime as soon as your doctor or midwife gives you the all-clear, most likely at your 6week postpartum appointment.

If you are breastfeeding remember that you will need an extra 500 calories a day to nourish you and baby so this is not the time for any starvation diets—well balanced healthy meals are always the best choice! Nursing or not, you MUST stay well hydrated regardless!

Like any fitness program, your post-partum routine should consist of fat-burning, heart strengthening cardio, muscle building strength exercises for your whole body and a flexibility program. Post partum moms will also want to pay extra special attention to their cores in order to strengthen and tone the abdominal area. Remember that no amount of crunches will burn away the fat, but they will strengthen the muscles underneath and tighten what they can so when your cardio starts to melt the rest away, you'll be ready!

Depending on your fitness level before and during your pregnancy and the type of delivery you had—high impact exercises like running, and impact aerobics are not a great idea until you are fully healed. Step Aerobics are a favorite of mine but only you and your doctor will know what is best. Make sure no matter what you do that you wear a very supportive bra—especially if you are nursing! The less bounce the better! For strength training, I would not recommend heavy lifting to start, but gradual weight training or resistance band training is a great idea. As is Pilates and yoga for your core! Walking of course is always a great activity—especially when carrying a baby or pushing a stroller! There are some great mommy & me classes available that are geared towards getting you back in shape but don't feel that you have to limit yourself to these classes if they are not the right fit for you. There is no reason to carry those baby pounds around with you, the best gift you can give your child is a happy and healthy mom!

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