

ON NUTRITION

Tips from readers on counting calories

In response to recent columns about counting calories, a few readers responded with their own suggestions:

Karen K. in Dallas (who notes she's the daughter of a dietitian)



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writes: "As an alternative approach for those who don't enjoy counting calories, simply cutting portion sizes does essentially the same thing. Portion sizes in the U.S. have gone

astronomical, and my husband and I have had great success with portion control. We eat at home mostly, but when eating out, we almost always share an entree. If I am dining with girlfriends, either we split a meal or I immediately ask for a to-go box and put half away for another meal later. Just another perspective to share."

Thanks, Karen. This reminds me of a patient who came in some years ago with a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes and obesity. She had some intellectual disabilities and needed a simple plan for eating. But she wasn't willing to change her familiar routine of eating out for most of her meals. She did, however, take to heart a suggestion to eat half her meal and save the leftovers for the next. In a few months, her diabetes was under control and she had lost 38 pounds.

Yes, portion control works.

A. Wilson, also from Dallas, reminded me of the old saying, "Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, dinner like a pauper."

"You may have to check this out," he writes, "but John Nance Garner, U.S. vice president from 1933 to 1941, lived to be almost 99 years old (by following this advice)."

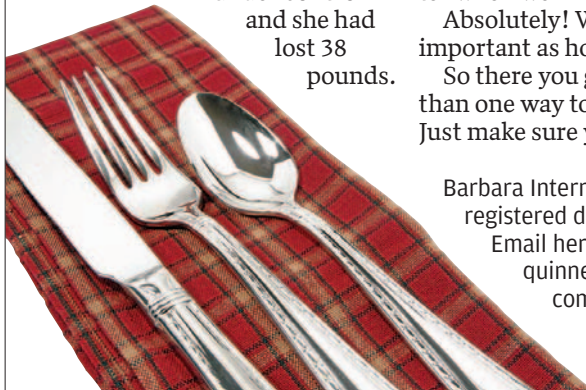
I was unable to verify if Garner was the original author of this quote. Some attribute it to the late Adele Davis, a sometimes controversial nutritionist and author. No matter. Some but not all studies have observed that more weight loss may be achieved when a greater percentage of daily calories is consumed earlier rather than later in the day. And you might also like this quote: "Eat breakfast yourself, share lunch with a friend, and give dinner away to your enemy" (from NutritionFacts.org).

Tina N. in Arizona sums up what works for her in this way: "We do not need to diet. We are in good health with low cholesterol and low blood pressure by eating daily for years as follows: Breakfast: All kinds of nuts, raisins and banana in hot oatmeal. Fresh fruits. Lunch: Beef, lamb, fish or chicken with brown rice and herbs,veggies. Fresh fruits. Dinner: Plain yogurt with herbs,veggies and bread. Fresh fruits. Drink fresh milk, green tea, water when we like. Thank you."

Absolutely! What we eat is as important as how much we eat.

So there you go. There's more than one way to peel an orange. Just make sure you eat it.

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