

The Lowdown

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COMPREHENSIVE WEIGHT LOSS CENTER

HURLEY

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Cook More Meals at Home!

Whether you live alone or in a household of many, cooking and preparing meals at home can seem like a daunting task. While eating out or ordering food might seem like the easiest option, consistent intake of convenience foods can take a large toll on your health and mood. However, there are many reasons to cook at home and they go far beyond just the health benefits!

Cooking at home can actually lead to lower monthly food bills. Did you know the average cost for a “cheeseburger meal” at a fast food joint costs approximately \$6.00 - 7.00? Alternatively, you can meal prep a salad for lunch with bagged salad, green peppers, cherry tomatoes, rotisserie chicken, salad dressing, and a side of whole grain crackers for approximately \$3.50 per serving. This change alone could save you around \$850 per year! Furthermore, cooking at home allows you to look ahead at deals being offered at local grocery stores. You can then use more affordable ingredients to make larger batches, which can be frozen for future meals, saving both time and money!

However, one of the largest benefits to cooking meals at home is that YOU get total control of what ingredients are

going into YOUR food. It is no secret that fast food and restaurant meals are higher in chemical additives, artificial dyes, preservatives, potential carcinogens, sugar, sodium, unhealthy fats, etc. The portion sizes when eating out are also typically larger than needed, leading to an increase in total caloric intake. All of this can have a significant negative impact on your overall physical and mental health.

That said, cooking at home does not have to be complicated. The easiest way to think about eating a “healthy diet” is to eat food as close as possible to the way nature made it. Replace processed foods with whole foods with a focus on lean proteins, whole grains, fruits, and veggies. You do not have to spend hours in the kitchen creating extravagant meals. The simplest meals are often the tastiest. Check out the “Recipe Round-up” on page 3 for some yummy, whole food based-meal ideas!

Remember, **if you do not take time for your wellness, you will need to make time for your illness.** Focus on cooking more meals at home this fall. Both your mind and body will thank you!

Focus On Fitness

Fall Fitness

With the cooler temperatures and beautiful scenery, the fall weather offers great opportunities to get outside and incorporate exercise! From hiking and walking, to bike riding, or even yard work... there are many benefits of fall exercise.

First, the temperatures. The cooler weather can make outdoor activities more enjoyable compared to the heat and humidity of summer. With fall also comes colorful foliage, which can provide a stunning backdrop on walks, hikes, and bike rides!

Another benefit is outdoor fall exercise can also improve your mood! Even in colder weather, exercise will still release endorphins. These endorphins can help fight off any oncoming seasonal blues.

A third benefit to staying active is it helps to improve your immune system. You will thank yourself when the cold and flu season approaches!

Lastly, of course, burning off some extra calories! During this time of year, it is a common tradition to make a day trip to an apple orchard or pumpkin patch. Adding extra exercise can help you to maintain your weight and still enjoy a sweet fall treat!

by Myckayla Myers, RDN

Probiotics vs Prebiotics and Their Benefits

Probiotics are small living organisms such as bacteria and yeasts. In correct amounts, these organisms are beneficial and necessary for our bodies to work properly. Prebiotics, on the other hand, are essentially the food for the probiotics. These are typically types of fiber that humans are unable to digest. Probiotics and prebiotics work together to create a healthy gut, otherwise known as the microbiome.

Health benefits associated with probiotics include improved digestion, immune health, creation of certain vitamins and short-chain fatty acids, and even improved mental health. It is important to note that different strains offer varying benefits, so one strain of a probiotic will not provide all benefits.

You might be thinking you are about to be told to buy a probiotic supplement. However, you can actually increase your intake of probiotics by having a wide range of food choices that include fermented foods and beverages. Examples of fermented foods that have probiotics are kimchi, sauerkraut, kefir, miso, tempeh, Greek yogurt, and pickles. You can find sauerkraut, pickles, and kimchi in the refrigerated section of most grocery stores, and these should contain active probiotics. If choosing canned versions of a fermented food, the probiotics are killed during the canning process. Fermented options that do

not include beneficial probiotics would be alcoholic beverages, such as beer. The alcohol prevents the growth of probiotics and can cause more adverse health outcomes than provided benefits.

To ensure the probiotics have food to eat, we need to have adequate amounts of fiber from different sources, as not all fiber is considered a prebiotic. To promote good gut health, it is recommended to have 5 grams of prebiotic fiber daily. Some examples of prebiotic-containing foods are bananas, berries, onions, garlic, asparagus, oats, barley, beans, and more. Sometimes prebiotics are added to foods, so checking the ingredient list is necessary. Prebiotics are unlikely to be listed as “prebiotic” on the ingredient label, so look for the following terms: inulin, chicory root, galacto-oligosaccharides (GOS), fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS), and oligofructose (OF).

When people start making changes to their diet to include more prebiotics and probiotics, there may be side effects. The most common side effect is abdominal discomfort from increased gas production. As the probiotics consume the prebiotics, gas is produced in the colon, leading to increased flatulence or bloating. Ways to avoid or lessen these side effects include slowly adding the pre- and probiotic sources. If starting to take a probiotic or prebiotic supplement capsule, begin taking it every other day and slowly increase to daily to minimize unwanted side effects. And, as always, talk to your health professional if you have any questions or concerns.

Spotlight on Success



Alyssa **Before & After**
Sleeve Gastrectomy

In November of 2023, I had the gastric sleeve surgery and since then I have lost 123 pounds. The transformation has been nothing short of life changing. Everyday tasks that once felt exhausting are now easy. I can run and play with my daughter without getting tired. I finally have the energy to live life to the fullest and prioritizing my health is now something I truly enjoy, because it feels so good.

“This surgery has given me a second chance and my life back. I am so excited for all of the moments still ahead.”

My success comes down to three key factors. First, the amazing team at the Hurley

Comprehensive Weight Loss Center. Their guidance and expertise have been invaluable throughout this entire process.

Second, the lifestyle changes I have committed to and implemented. Exercise and strength training are now part of my routine. I also prioritize healthy eating habits and I have worked hard to change my relationship with food.

Third, my husband, family, and friends who have been my biggest support. They have encouraged me on the tough days and have cheered for me at every milestone. This surgery has given me a second chance and my life back. I am so excited for all of the moments still ahead.



Creamy White Chili with Sweet Potatoes & Beans

Yield: 6 servings

Serving Size: approx. 1 ¼ cups

Ingredients:

1 Tbsp olive or avocado oil
1 large sweet potatoes, cubed
1 medium yellow onion, chopped
2 Tbsp minced garlic
1 ½ tsp ground cumin
¼ tsp salt
2 (15 oz) cans, no salt added Great Northern Beans, rinsed
2 ½ cups unsalted vegetable broth
1 (4 oz) can chopped green chiles, undrained
4oz reduced-fat cream cheese
Fresh cilantro for garnish (optional)
Lime wedges for serving (optional)

Directions:

1. Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add chopped sweet potato and onion, stirring often, until the onion begins to soften (approx. 5 minutes).
2. To the pot, add minced garlic, cumin, and salt. Cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant (approx. 30 seconds).
3. Add rinsed beans, broth, and 1 can green chiles. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally.
4. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cook, stirring occasionally, until sweet potatoes are tender.
5. Remove from heat; stir in cream cheese until melted.
6. Garnish with cilantro and lime wedges and enjoy!

Nutrition information per serving (Creamy White Chili):

229 calories, 11g pro, 32g carb, 7g fat, 8g fiber



Harvest Meal Prep Bowls

Yield: 4 Servings

Serving Size: ¼ of the recipe

Ingredients:

1, 10oz, bag spinach
1 large sweet potato, diced
2 cups Brussels sprouts, halved
2 Tbsp olive oil
Salt and pepper, to taste
2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 apple, diced
½ cup reduced-fat feta cheese

Ingredients (for the sauce):

1/3 cup plain nonfat Greek yogurt
Juice of 1 lemon
1 Tbsp pure maple syrup
Pinch of salt
2 Tbsp Dijon mustard
1 clove garlic, minced

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425 F.
2. In a large bowl, combine Brussels sprouts, sweet potato, olive oil, salt and pepper. Toss to combine.
3. Spread sweet potatoes and Brussels sprouts in a single layer on a baking sheet. Roast until the sweet potatoes are soft, approx. 20-25 min.
4. In the meantime, sauté chicken breasts over medium-high heat until cooked through (4-5 minutes each side), dice into cubes.
5. Divide the spinach among four meal prep containers. Top evenly with sweet potato, Brussels sprouts, chicken, apple, and feta.
6. For the dressing, place all ingredients into a blender and pulse until smooth. Add water to thin dressing, if needed.
7. Dress each bowl right before serving.

Nutrition information per serving (Harvest Bowl):

356 calories, 37g pro, 26g carb, 12g fat, 6g fiber

Now offering a med-based nonsurgical medical weight loss program!

The Hurley Comprehensive Weight Loss Center is now offering a med-based nonsurgical medical weight loss program. This program is designed for individuals who are not interested in surgical weight loss, but would like to see if anti-obesity medications, such as Wegovy, Zepbound, Adipex, etc., are a good option for them. If you know of someone who may be interested in this program, have them call our clinic at 810-262-2330 for more information.

Available: The Post-Op Refresher Course!

Now available in the evening! During this one hour class you will receive nutrition education from one of our Registered Dietitians regarding meal choices, serving sizes, and general post-op recommendations. This class is designed for The Hurley Comprehensive Weight Loss Center patients that are at least one year post-op. It is perfect if you want help getting back on track of if you just want a refresher in general! Call to schedule as the course fee is only \$10 and spots are limited.

Support Group:

Join us for our monthly support group! This is open to both pre- and post- surgery patients!

The support group meets the 1st Monday of every month from 5:30-6:30PM at the Hurley Comprehensive Weight Loss Center (with exception of inclement weather/holidays). No need to pre-register— just come! Call 810-262-2330 for details.