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Diet & GI Health

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It's that time of year again, time to re-evaluate your waist line.

A new year means making resolutions, changing old habits, and gaining a new outlook. For many, the new year means shedding those pesky holiday pounds. However, there are important things to consider when choosing a healthy weight loss path, especially when it comes to your digestive health.



Fad diets can promise fast results, but limit your nutritional intake, can be unhealthy, and tend to fail in the long run. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight isn't about short-term dietary changes. It's about a lifestyle that includes healthy eating, regular physical activity, and balancing the number of calories you consume with the number of calories your body uses (CDC, 2017).

Midwest GI's Dietitian, Karisa Jansen, recommends setting small attainable goals for weight loss. "Don't set yourself up for failure. Set one new goal every 1-2 weeks and stick with it. Move more. Don't tell yourself you'll start eating foods you don't like, instead, work with what you do like."

For your GI health, Karisa suggests a diet that includes fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains. "Most healthy adults should aim for plenty of fiber in their diet to include 25-40 g/day. Ample fiber can lower your risk of colon cancer and other intestinal disorders."

Karisa also stresses the importance of different diets for the various GI issues, such as celiac and gastroparesis. "Diet depends on the patients individual needs, but there are certainly foods to avoid or include for various GI diagnoses." Be sure you are following the diet that is recommended to you by your physician or dietitian.

Another key component to a healthy digestive system is exercise. According to Karisa, "Exercise can help with the movement of food through the digestive system. A sedentary lifestyle, or sitting throughout the day, can lead to slower digestion."

A healthy eating plan and an active lifestyle will help you maintain your weight, reduce stress, and reduce your risk for chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, osteoarthritis, and some forms of cancer (CDC, 2015). "By choosing to add more physical activity to your day, you'll increase the amount of calories your body burns. This makes it more likely you'll maintain your weight and it can help keep your body healthy and strong" (2015).

For optimal GI health be sure to include fruits, vegetables, and fiber. If you are not sure what diet is right for you, be sure to consult your physician or dietitian.

Healthy Weight. (2017, June 7). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/index.html>

Preventing Weight Gain. (2015, May 15). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/prevention/index.html>