



Nutrition News You Can Use

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Contact Me

Carol Turner PhD, RD, LD
Food & Nutrition Specialist
Cooperative Extension Service
New Mexico State University
(575) 646-3588
caturner@nmsu.edu



Adopt New Habits Instead of New Year's Resolutions

Forget New Year's resolutions about food. They don't work and usually by February they are long forgotten. Especially if, like many, your resolution is to lose weight in 2008. The problem is that resolutions address the goal instead of formulating a plan about how to get there. Losing weight as a goal is much too vague. Many people start the latest fad diet or adopt whatever worked for their favorite celebrity. But they quickly start feeling deprived and then old habits return.

Too often weight loss programs are event-related; you are planning to attend your high school reunion and you have to lose 30 pounds, so you go on the latest crash diet. That never works in the long run. Almost everyone quickly regains the weight they lost after they quit depriving themselves of the things they love best. Until the next event and the next crash diet.

Instead, resolve to aim small in 2009 and make changes that will hardly be noticeable such as reducing your calorie intake by 100 calories per day. You may think that doesn't sound like much, but following it consistently will add up to a 10-pound loss by this time next year or more if you make several 100 calorie changes.

Other Small Changes Worth Adopting

- Switch to smaller plates and fill half with vegetables, then add protein and starchy foods. Limit second helpings to vegetables or salad.
- Add fiber to your diet through increasing vegetables, fruits and whole grains. The USDA recommends making at least half of your grain-based foods whole grains.
- Slow down your meals, think about and enjoy your food. It is a good idea to wait at least 10 minutes before taking a second helping to see if you are really still hungry. It takes about 20 minutes for the brain to realize you are full.
- Eliminate sugary drinks or switch to artificially sweetened choices.
- Order smaller portions of everything from hamburgers and fries to lattes. You can always have another one if it isn't enough, but give it a chance.
- When eating out, think extra small and extra large; order a kid's size burger or fries and a large salad and calorie-free drink.
- Downsize specialty coffee drinks, use fat-free and sugar-free options and skip the whip.

Improve Food Behaviors

- Break down any big goal into smaller and more specific action plans.
- Set small and specific daily or weekly goals.
- Be patient.
- Be realistic.

- Celebrate small successes (but not with food).
- Forgive yourself if you lose it and binge occasionally. Long term habit change is about doing something most of the time instead of all the time.

Watch For Results

If you are successful in adopting new food habits, pounds will come off, albeit slowly. However, at this time next year when your friends comment on how good you look and ask if you've been dieting, you can tell them that you have changed your eating habits instead. That's a resolution worth keeping.

Food for Thought - Trends for 2009

It's that time of year when many people will be reflecting and making personal commitments toward healthier lifestyle choices in the New Year. As consumers get increasingly concerned with their food choices, manufacturers are listening. We can anticipate food trends for 2009 to focus on the environment and local sourcing, food safety, and health.



Concerns about the impact our food choices have on the environment are beginning to influence decisions about purchasing food. Organic will continue to be important, but we are also questioning whether eating organic grapes from Chile are an environmentally sound choice given how far the fruit has traveled. The growth in local farmers markets underscores the importance of local sourcing to consumers. Increasingly, consumers want to know where their food comes from, what's in it, and is it natural. We are already seeing restaurant owners and chefs bragging about the locally grown foods on their menus. We see food manufacturers responding with more environmentally friendly products and more environmental claims on products and company websites in 2009.

Food safety is a big concern for consumers. Repeated recalls of meat and produce have drawn attention to food-safety. We can expect to see more emphasis put on food safety by manufacturers and most likely more headlines causing the food industry and government to make changes in the way outbreaks is addressed.

New and improved health concepts will make headlines in the New Year. Watch for additional products touting their unique probiotic formula. Trend watchers are hearing chocolate is going to make a splash with the addition of probiotics. I anticipate this will be a big hit with consumers – a food that gets to the heart and gut at the same time, plus tastes good.

Salt has been making headlines with a push for manufacturers to lower the content in processed foods. It is anticipated manufacturers are going to formulate some of their products with sea salt rather than mineral salt. Although for some who need to watch their sodium intake it doesn't really matter where the salt comes from – what's important is how much. So continue to keep an eye on sodium content on the food labels as manufacturers make adjustments in sodium content.

We may also start to see different forms of sweeteners in products. Trend watchers are anticipating that a growing variety of alternative natural sweeteners such as honey, agave syrup and stevia will show up more frequently in food products.

Mintel, a global supplier of consumer, product and media intelligence, forecasts a bottled water backlash with restaurants opting to exclusively serve tap water.

They also anticipate more functional waters such as those with added vitamins and minerals.

We'll have to wait to see what the New Year brings, but when it comes to trends in food and marketing there is always interesting food for thought.

What does 'Certified Organic' really mean?

Buying organic is becoming more and more popular as some worry about the health and safety of the foods they eat. But what does it mean for a food to be organic? According to the National Organic Program of the USDA, organic meat, poultry, eggs and dairy products come from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones.

Organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides, fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewer sludge, bioengineering or ionizing radiation. For a food to be certified as organic, the product must come from a farm and processing plant that is certified as organic. This means they go through an inspection process from certified government officials that ensure organic farms are up to the USDA organic standards.

It's the responsibility of the inspectors to assure that only organic methods are used and that there is no impact on the environment, such as contamination from pesticides, synthetic fertilizers or other non-organic compounds.

Just as food labels must meet standards to say that they are "heart healthy," organic foods must meet standards to make the claim that they are organic. The labeling requirements are based on the percentage of organic ingredients in a product. The following definitions and facts can help you understand organic food labels better:

- Agricultural products labeled "100 percent organic" must contain all organically grown ingredients and processing aids.
- Products labeled "organic" must contain at least 95 percent organically produced ingredients, except for added water and salt.
- The USDA seal and the seal or mark of approval involved in certifying agents may appear on product packages and in advertisements.
- Agricultural products labeled "100 percent organic" and "organic" can't be produced using excluded methods, sewage sludge or ionizing radiation.
- If buying processed products labeled "Made with Organic Ingredients," these products need to contain at least 70 percent organic ingredients, and list up to three organic ingredients or food groups on the principal display panel.
- Processed products that "contain less than 70 percent organic ingredients," can't use the term organic anywhere on the principal display panel. However, they may identify specific ingredients that are organically produced on the ingredients statement.

The following photo shows examples of the labels that may be used on a wide



variety of products that use organic ingredients.



The sample cereal boxes show the four labeling categories. From left: cereal with 100 percent organic ingredients; cereal with 95-100 percent organic ingredients; cereal made with at least 70 percent organic ingredients; and cereal with less than 70 percent organic ingredients. Products with less than 70 percent organic ingredients may list specific organically produced ingredients on the side panel of the package, but may not make any organic claims on the front of the package. Look for the name and address of the Government-approved certifier on all packaged products that contain at least 70 percent organic ingredients.

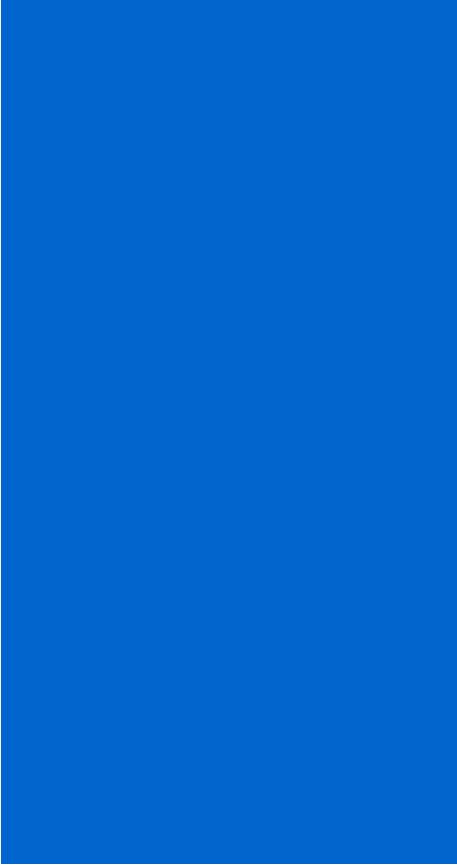
Are organic foods better for you than non-organic foods? The verdict is still out on that. One point to consider is that organic products aren't more nutritious than conventionally grown foods. If you compare an organic apple versus a conventional apple, you would receive the same vitamins in the same amounts. The drawback for many with organic products is cost. They're more expensive to grow than conventionally grown foods and that cost shows up in higher prices at the grocery store.

Budget Savvy Grocery List

With the cost of food rising, more people are asking how to afford healthy foods. Here are Examples of how to be wise and savvy with a shopping list.

- Read the per ounce price and compare products.
- Buy generic instead of brand names.
- Make a grocery list and only buy what you need.
- Plan a 5 day menu for you or your family and stick with it. Monday: Italian food; Tuesday: American food; Wednesday: Mexican food; Thursday: grill your food; Friday: make your own pizza.
- Look for the sales in the newspaper.
- Clip coupons.
- Don't buy cookies, desserts, or other snack foods that are high in calories and sugar.
- Don't spend money on sodas or other beverages such as waters with vitamins. Use your tea bags to make iced teas.
- Drink tap water and don't spend money on water bottles.



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- Buy whole wheat pasta, whole wheat bread or brown rice. You will feel fuller faster.
 - Keep protein foods such as chicken and meat to 3 ounce portion which is the size of the deck of cards. Make stir fry, kabobs, cut the chicken breast lengthwise, to split into two portions.
 - When shopping for food in bulk, buy frozen foods, frozen vegetables.
 - If you buy bread in bulk, or you buy it on sale, freeze them for later.
 - Buy frozen seafood or fish and only cook what you need. Do the same with frozen chicken.
 - Buy low sodium soups, canned vegetables with “no added salt” and canned fruits for desserts with “no sugar added”.
 - Buy heads of lettuce for your salad. Do your own chopping and cleaning.
 - Buy canned tomatoes for your sauces, canned refried beans for your dips or burritos.
 - Purchase foods that you know it will cost you a lot to prepare. For example, some foods are worth the price because it might take too much work or it needs a good cook to prepare. If you don't know how to cook, then stock up on canned beans and green chile sauce.
 - Limit convenience foods that you know how to prepare. You can open a can of tuna and pack it for lunch. Instead of buying it already packed for you.
 - Last, do not throw away any foods. Use leftovers when cooking or eat leftovers one night of the week.
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