

To Eat Healthy or Not - That is the Question!

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Food, Food, Food...Everywhere I drive, every other commercial and many of my conversations deal with food. Now we all obviously need food to survive. My challenge involves the myriad of choices (most of which are not healthy!) I am faced with on a daily basis. To eat healthy or not...that is the question!

We at Fit-Body Ezine feel your pain. All of my friends know that I have a deep love affair with food. From shopping for it, to preparing it and most enjoyably eating it! What is a girl to do?

First, I realized I had to make a commitment to take care of myself and my family and be more vigilant about reading labels. Knowledge is power or so the adage goes. There are some great resources that can get you up to date on the labels you find on most packaged food – trans fat, saturated fats, total fat, etc. (www.mypyramid.gov)

Second, I had to find a way to balance my desire to eat well with the reality of the expense of feeding a family of five. One word – Farmer's Market! I have become a Dekalb Farmer's Market fanatic (for those living in Atlanta, but most cities have a local farmers market). I saw a television program several years ago that stressed the financial benefits of shopping around the outside aisles of the grocery store and avoiding the inner aisles. The program pointed out those inner aisles contained the high priced, often highly processed or high sugar foods. The Farmer's Market satisfies my need for good, fresh food at a great price. In addition, you completely avoid the struggle to avoid the inner aisle allure. Farmer's Markets are usually only about fresh produce, meats and organic products without the bells and whistles that often drive up price. That is not to say that I don't give in to the inner aisle allure (I have children after all...), but I am more vigilant about the labels – see point #1.

Third, I had to get organized. "An ounce of preparation goes a long way" (that was my last "old adage!"). I, like many of our members, are faced with tremendous demands on my time. However, the biggest roadblock to my own desire to eat healthier is last minute STARVATION. You know, when you've waited so long to eat that you will eat anything. Two problems: 1. it's not good for your body and 2. unless you keep healthy snacks around, those fast food restaurants start to look good. So, I have started to prepare healthy, quick meals on Sunday to get ahead of the game. With 3 small children and full-time jobs (plus my passion – Fit-Body Ezine!), my husband and I never know what the week ahead will hold. I have finally come to realize that taking simple steps like chopping vegetables and planning 2 or 3 meals ahead on a Sunday saves me headaches, unnecessary fast food stops and keeps me on track to setting a healthy example for my children.

Finally, Fit-Body Ezine's philosophy looms over me everyday "Fit isn't about what we give up, it's about what we gain in our roles as sisters, daughters, mothers, role-models and friends." Nothing like a little guilt to keep you motivated. Seriously, I try not to let myself think of it like I am giving up on foods that I love. I am simply finding healthier, satisfying alternatives. I love it when I find a new way to make a recipe by substituting healthier ingredients – turkey instead of beef, more vegetables etc. There is a great website www.newblackculturaldiet.com with great ideas on this very topic.

These are some simple steps to take with long-term benefits. Once you try them a few times they start to become habit. They say it takes six times of doing something to make it a habit (ok, that was one more old adage!). If that is true, my challenge to you is try these tips for 6 weeks and let me know if you see a benefit! See you at the Farmer's Market; I will be the one with the 3 loud children.