

the healthy swimmer



Lose Weight by Tracking Calories

Do you know how many calories you consumed today? If so, you are among a small minority of Americans aware of their daily caloric intake. One of the most popular New Year's resolutions is the desire to lose weight, but most people really struggle with it.

American Heart Association nutritionists recommend "adopting healthy eating habits permanently, rather than impatiently pursuing crash diets in hopes of losing unwanted pounds in a few days." An effective way to start changing eating habits is to track what you eat by using a food diary.

Food diaries are written journals of foods, portion sizes, calories and fat consumed on a daily basis. They also can be used to note environmental factors such as location, mood, activities undertaken while eating and whether you were alone or with friends. A food diary can be as simple or as complex as you choose, and studies show that keeping track of what you eat for even a day can influence better food choices.

The key to using a food diary is to first determine a reasonable estimate of daily caloric intake needed to maintain current weight or to achieve weight loss. Daily calorie calculators, such as one found on the Mayo Clinic web site (www.mayoclinic.com/health/calorie-calculator/NU00598), usually factor age, sex, weight, height and activity level. For example, a 35-year-old female who is 5 foot 8 inches tall, 145 pounds and does vigorous exercise six hours weekly would need to consume 1,854 calories daily to maintain her weight. To lose weight, she would need to either add more activity or cut some calories—or both. <<<

>>> **If you're trying to lose weight, consult with your physician before getting started. For more information about how to start a food diary, visit <http://familydoctor.org/299.xml>.**

Don Carstens/Brand X Pictures/Jupiterimages

Meditation May Build Brain Power

A new study suggests that people who practice meditation may benefit because they are building the outer layer of the brain. Sara Lazar, with Harvard Medical School's department of psychiatry, presented this finding during the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience.

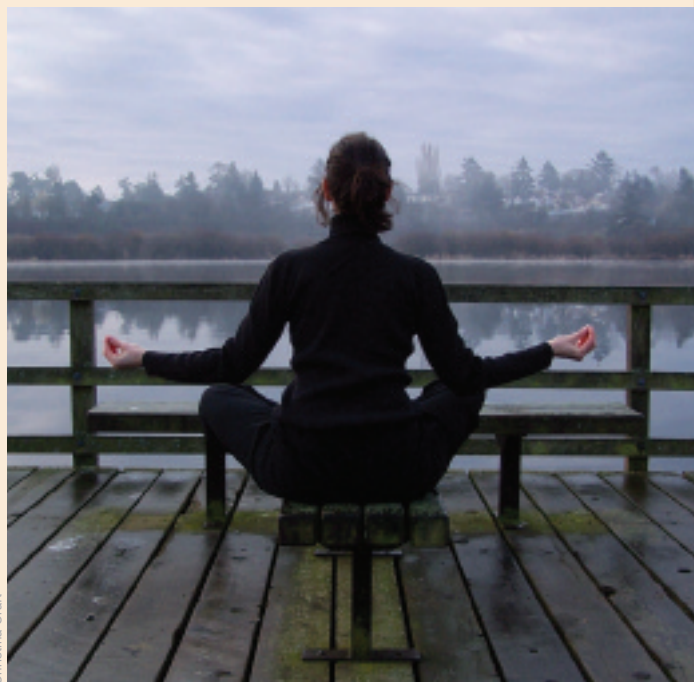
According to the study, areas of the cerebral cortex, the brain's outer layer, were found to be thicker in people who practice meditation. Lazar and fellow researchers studied 20 people who had an average of nine years of training in Buddhist meditation. Using magnetic resonance imaging,

the researchers compared the brains of meditators against a control group of 15 subjects who did not meditate.

"Studies have shown people who meditate are more relaxed, and skeptics will say, 'Of course they're more relaxed. They're just sitting there,'" said Lazar. "But sitting and relaxing in front of the TV doesn't make your brain grow."

According to the research, meditation changes gray matter. Subjects who meditated regularly were found to have an increased thickness in the insula region of the brain, which integrates thoughts and emotions. <<<

>>> **For more information about the research, visit <http://lazar-meditation-research.info>.**



Christina Craft



Eitichi Onodera/Dex Image/Jupiterimages

Uncooked Soy May Lower Cholesterol

According to a recent report in the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*, consuming uncooked soy products may lower cholesterol. The study, by University of Kentucky physician and researcher James Anderson, also suggests that cooked soy products may not provide the same benefit.

Anderson published a previous study on soy and cholesterol in 1995, but the estimated percentage of cholesterol lowered (12 to 13 percent) did not bear out. The current study shows an 8 to 9 percent reduction in low-density lipoprotein in subjects who consumed two servings a day of raw soy protein for 30 days.

Raw soy protein is found in tofu, soymilk, soy nuts, soy powder or edamame, a fresh soybean product that is typically parboiled and quick frozen to

retain its freshness. Long popular in Japan, edamame is gaining a consumer following in the United States.

“Soy protein increases the activity of low-density lipoprotein receptors, primarily on the liver that clears it from the body,” Anderson reports. “Eating soy protein increases the activity of these enzymes that break down the cholesterol.”

According to the research, products containing soy protein baked at high temperatures do not provide the same benefit as uncooked soy. Because cooking affects the amino acids in soy proteins, the health benefits may be reduced or lost. However, cooking does not destroy products containing stabilized soy proteins, such as tofu. <<<

>>> **To learn more about soy, including links to other reports, visit Sloan-Kettering at www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/11571.cfm?RecordID=510&tab=HC.**

reader recipe

Looking to add soy to your diet? Try edamame salad. This tasty, easy-to-prepare salad makes a nutritious side dish or snack.

Edamame Salad

_____ 2 c	edamame
_____ 1 t	toasted sesame oil
_____ 1 T	rice vinegar
_____ 1 T	low sodium soy
_____ 1 T	fresh grated ginger
_____ 2 T	chopped green onion
_____	fresh ground black pepper

Using pre-shelled, frozen edamame, blanch the beans in boiling water for a minute or two according to package instructions. Remove immediately and cold shock in ice water. Drain, and toss with remaining ingredients. Serve chilled or at room temperature. <<<

Servings: 4
Calories per serving: 130
Grams of fat per serving: 8

>>> DO YOU HAVE A RECIPE OUR READERS WOULD ENJOY?

Send to editor@usms.org, or mail to: Reader Recipe, c/o Bill Volckening, 1220 NW 119th Place, Portland, OR 97229.

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U.S. Surgeon General Pushes Family History Initiative

Family health history is one of the few uncontrollable risk factors for common diseases such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes. But knowing your genetic risks can be important to your wellness path.

U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has launched a national public health campaign to encourage all American families to learn more about their family health history. A recent survey found that 96 percent of Americans feel it is important to know their family health history, yet the same survey found that only one-third of those who responded have tried to gather and write down their family's health history.

Although heredity, sex and age-related risk factors can't be modified, other health risk factors that are sometimes common within families such as cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, smoking and inactivity are controllable. Charting all risk factors within your family can lead to better healthcare.

Family health history provides useful patient screening information for physicians, and the U.S. Surgeon General has created a new Internet-based tool to make it easy for individuals to compile that information. Called My Family Health Portrait, the program is accessible using any major Internet browser. This web-based tool helps users organize family history information, which they can then print for their physicians. <<<

>>> **For more information, visit My Family Health Portrait at <https://familyhistory.hhs.gov>.**