

HEALTHY LIVING

Goodbye to meat

More fruit, healthy protein likely to boost energy, quality of life

BY JAMIE GUMBRECHT

Special To Florida Weekly

As gardens get greener, farmers markets overflow with produce and our cravings for light, summer foods intensify, there's that temptation to do the unthinkable: turn that dinner salad into a meal, then a habit. Go all the way — go vegetarian.

Dietitian Trulie Ankerberg of Decatur, Ga., suggests that people who are considering a diet change start by bulking up on fruits, and especially nutrient-dense vegetables, gradually adding those while reducing the amount of meat.

"There's not enough time in the day, not enough room in their stomachs to get it all in," Ms. Ankerberg said. "You have to increase your goal as you go."

But many vegetarians who cut out meat find they still have an unhealthy diet packed with dairy products and fried foods; pizza, french fries and chocolate cake can be vegetarian, after all. Going with a vegan meal plan — one that eliminates animal products entirely

— may be where some find the health benefits they're looking for, Ms. Ankerberg said.

Zacoor Israel, an assistant manager at Soul Vegetarian #2, a vegan restaurant in Atlanta, said he became a vegan in 1996, when he weighed close to 200 pounds. Heart disease, diabetes and strokes run in his family and he decided to make a change.

Within three months, he was down to 165 pounds and had more energy. His diet became a lifestyle.

"I became more socially conscious," he said. "When you get meat out of your ears, you start hearing things in another kind of way."

Ms. Ankerberg said a vegan diet won't work for everybody, but learning to fill the table with fresh foods and meat alternatives can help diversify dinner-time while improving the entire family's health.

"You don't have to corner yourself into a label," she said. "You can find your happy medium and do what you can. ■"



JAMIE GUMBRECHT / COX NEWSPAPERS

Lemon Dream Pie With Blueberry Glaze features silken tofu and lemon juice and zest in the filling and fresh or frozen blueberries sweetened with apple juice for the topping.

SUBSTITUTIONS

A vegan diet can be less about cutting foods out and more about adding ingredients in. Here are some substitutions:

- **Milk:** Try a nondairy product such as soy, rice or almond milk. As long as they're not too sweet, they're interchangeable.

- **Eggs:** Depending on the recipe, tofu, applesauce or an egg substitute, such as Ener-G can usually perform the same duties.

- **Butter and lard:** Try a non-hydro-

genated substitute such as an Earth Balance vegan product.

- **Mayonnaise:** On salads and sandwiches, Veganaise is a brilliant substitute for the egg-and-oil mixture.

- **Meat:** It's often the toughest thing for people to give up, but vegans and vegetarians can get plenty of nondairy protein from tofu, tempeh, seitan and even meat substitutes designed to look and taste like sausage, chicken and hot dogs. ■

GLOSSARY

Consider this a public-service announcement: A vegetarian diet is a choice. Some do it for health or ethical reasons. Plenty will admit that they're just picky eaters, or got started because they wanted to impress someone. If you put pepperoni on your pizza, the vegetarian police won't come get you. But if you need a name for your diet, or want to understand all the terms people throw around to describe how they eat, here's a quick look:

- **Vegetarian:** General term for someone who doesn't eat meat.

- **Lacto-vegetarian:** Vegetarian

who does not eat eggs, but does eat dairy products.

- **Ovo-vegetarian:** Vegetarian who does not eat meat or dairy products, but does eat eggs.

- **Vegan:** Vegetarian who does not eat meat, eggs, dairy products or other animal products. Many avoid using animal-tested items and products such as fur and leather.

- **Pescatarian:** People who don't eat meat, other than fish.

- **Flexitarian:** People who eat mostly vegetarian diets, but occasionally eat meat. ■

Debunking some exercise and diet misconceptions

BY MARJIE GILLIAM

Special To Florida Weekly

Just as one diet and exercise myth is laid to rest, it seems another one is ready to take its place. Some of the most common misconceptions include:

Myth: Gaining body fat is inevitable as we age.

Reality: Although our metabolism slows as much as 5 percent per decade after age 40, much of this is due to insufficient amounts of exercise, which leads to loss of muscle and bone over time. The less muscle and bone tissue we have, the fewer calories (energy) we need. At this point, we rarely adjust calories downward to compensate for this loss.

To compound matters, the more we sit, the more we tend to eat. This double whammy of less energy expended and more energy eaten results in the inevitable increase in body fat, especially around the waistline. Excess abdominal fat predisposes people to higher incidences of type 2 diabetes, blood pressure, cholesterol and cardiovascular disease.

To rev up the metabolism again, it is important to do resistance training on a regular basis, to restimulate bone and muscle growth, at minimum, two to three times a week. Choose exercises that work all of the major muscle groups, which include the legs, back, chest, shoulder, biceps and triceps.

Increasing your strength lessens your risk of injuries, makes everyday tasks easier to manage, and goes a long way toward maintaining a healthy weight.

Myth: Drinking ice water will help you lose weight.

Reality: Our bodies strive to maintain a temperature of about 98.6 degrees F. The burning of body fat, one of our primary energy sources, generates heat and is part of this process. Lowering the temperature of the body through external conditions such as going out into the cold when not properly dressed, swimming in cold water, or drinking ice water does create an increase in metabolism; however, this increase is rarely enough to create significant fat loss.

Drinking a half-gallon of ice water a day, for example, can help burn an additional 70 calories. Both shivering and sweating burn calories, although this, too, is usually not enough to produce significant weight loss for most people.

Myth: When you stop exercising, muscle turns into fat.

Reality: It is physiologically impossible for muscle to change into fat or vice versa because they are two different types of tissue. Calories eaten begin to feed fat cells if they aren't needed to fuel the muscles, resulting in changes to body composition.

The keys to maintaining a higher ratio of muscle to fat is related to everyday diet



and the consistency and intensity of physical activity. Some ways to create exercise intensity are to try a new activity, increase weight loads, sets, reps or speed of movement.

Working out at the gym is a great way to stay healthy, lean and toned, but any activity burns calories, and so for long-term suc-

cess, find things that you enjoy, which will keep you motivated.

As for diet, the majority of meals don't include nearly enough fruits and vegetables and whole grains. These foods contain necessary nutrients and fiber, so take a good look at your food choices to see where improvement can be made. ■

Health-care workers exploring social media

Hospitals are all tweeted up about the possibility of using social media in health care.

More than 75 people attended a recent day-long summit on social media that was sponsored by the Texas Hospital Association. Association spokesman Amanda Engler said social media is a new world for many health-care providers, and this was one way to help them explore tweets, blogs, instant messaging and other tools.

For Austin's St. David's HealthCare system, it was a chance to build on the ideas the hospital has already put in place. St. David's already has a Twitter account, along with a network of niche blogs, including one for expecting parents. St. David's officials said they hope to expand their social-networking reach to build community, both for patients and health-care providers.

"There's just tremendous opportunity

in social media for health care," said Christin Cross, St. David's corporate director of communication.

"Health care is the perfect application for social media," Ms. Cross said. "Patients are always looking for resources."

The seminars also gave hospital employees tools to navigate the tricky legal situations that come along with reaching out to patients and communities via social media, because of privacy laws that specifically address health care.

Ms. Cross said that its important for hospitals to have strict policies for social media to protect patient privacy, while still achieving technology's goals.

Participants also had a chance to interact with each other and to share their experiences entering the social-tech world.

"Our idea was to sort of harness what others have already learned," Ms. Engler said. ■