

Recharge your physical activity routine this winter

We all know how challenging it can be to keep our motivation high in the bitter cold winter months. Our advice is to be realistic with yourself and find *manageable* ways to include physical activity without making it feel like a chore. Some suggestions below:

- **Start tracking your steps, and challenge yourself to add 250 more steps each week.** You'd be surprised how easy it is. Did you know? Just a 10-minute walk can give you 1,000 steps.
- **Find a fun indoor class.** Whether it's an online video (most are free!) or a class at a nearby gym, find something you love (yoga, cycling, boot camp, Pilates, dance) and add it to your weekly routine.
- **Move, move, move!** Watching TV or talking on the phone at home? Walk around the house or do some basic floor exercises using your own body weight, resistance bands, or light hand weights. It may help to put post-its around your home or alerts on your phone to remind you.

Ask the dietitian!

"Everyone is talking about the "keto" diet. What exactly is it, and is this a safe and effective way to lose weight?"

Did you know the ketogenic ("keto") diet has been around for years as a potential treatment for epilepsy? **What exactly is it?** The keto diet is an extremely low-carbohydrate (typically <20-50 grams/day), high-fat diet. Since most cells in our body prefer to use carbs for fuel, we start breaking down stored fat (into "ketone bodies") for energy when there is a lack of blood sugar from food. **The problems with the keto diet** are: (1) it's very restrictive and thus difficult to adhere to (most Americans consume a ~50% carb diet!), (2) it's very high in fat, so you may inadvertently consume highly-processed, less nutritious foods and miss out on important nutrients, and (3) it requires close monitoring to make sure you are losing weight safely. **So... what's the takeaway?** Although carbs get a bad rap, there are many healthful, high-fiber carbs such as whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables. As long as they are consumed in appropriate portions, they can be part of a healthful, balanced, calorie-controlled diet and even assist with weight management. **Bottom line is:** find something that is safe and sustainable. We don't recommend following a strictly keto diet long-term for weight loss, however discuss with a professional if you are interested in a lower-carb eating plan.

Stay warm (and eat less!) with this perfect starter: 9 easy steps for delicious, recipe-free soup

Soup is the *perfect* way to begin your meal – it's flavorful, filling (yes, research shows you may eat fewer total calories at your meal if you have soup first), and easy. It's so easy that once you have mastered a few basic steps, you can use this guide to make soup with any vegetables you're in the mood for or have in your fridge! Another bonus – soup is ideal for freezing leftovers. Follow these quick steps to become a soup expert (and make it look impressive, too):

1. **Pick a base of alliums** (onion, shallot or leek) + chop.
2. **Choose any veggies** (carrots, butternut squash, zucchini, cauliflower, peas, celery root, corn, sweet potato, broccoli, etc. tend to work well) + chop into uniform chunks. (~1 handful of veggies per person). If you like a sweeter soup, can add an apple or pear.
3. **Sweat the veggies:** melt ~1 Tbsp olive oil, toss in allium(s) until softened, then add the rest of the chopped veggies with a sprinkle of salt and stir / let sit for a few minutes.

4. **Add aromatics** (think: ginger, garlic, curry powder, thyme sprig, bay leave, rosemary, cinnamon, chili peppers) that will go well with your veggie combo.
5. **Add water** (nope, you don't need stock or broth!) to cover veggies. Put lid on pot, bring to a boil, reduce heat and let it simmer until all veggies are soft and easily mashed (about 30 min).
6. **Puree** with an immersion blender, regular blender or Vitamix. Feel free to add more water for thinner soup or a dollop of yogurt for thicker soup.
7. **Season to taste** with salt, and perhaps a splash of lemon juice or vinegar to balance the flavors.
8. **Make it look fancy** (optional, of course) by swirling in some yogurt, herbed oil, or chutney. Finish it off with a garnish of fresh herbs, toasted nuts or seeds.
9. **Enjoy**, and freeze leftovers!



Adapted from epicurious.com

Call us for more information about scheduling a visit with one of our providers, joining our 12-week weight control group, learning about our meal replacement program, or getting involved in research.