

Consuming Thoughts

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Home Economist
For Berks Co.



LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — For many people, losing weight is an on-going situation which can only be accomplished by making real changes in diet and behavior. Weight is very often put on the body a little at a time over a long period of time. It really makes sense then to take the weight off in a similar manner.

A positive approach is to think about foods and to eat foods that are low in calories, high in nutritional value and foods you can eat in unlimited quantity. Think about vegetables and fruits in general, but in particular: broccoli, cucumbers, green peppers, greens, mushrooms, zucchini, plain popcorn, vegetable juice, and water.

Some low fat foods, high protein and minerals need to be eaten in controlled amounts; low fat milk, plain yogurt, fish, chicken, turkey and tuna are all good choices. Apples, bananas, grapes, potatoes and pasta, whole wheat bread are also good choices eaten plain. It is often the topping, butter or sugar, added to this group of food which really increase the calories. A little less sauce, butter, or sugar can keep meals delightful

and help you take control of your health.

A category of foods that are good nutritionally (i.e. contain protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals) but also contain considerable amounts of fat need to be eaten with caution. Control the amount of whole milk, flavored yogurt, cheese, beef, pork, lamb or ham, luncheon meat, foods like pizza, tacos, chili, and peanut butter.

If you really want to lose weight and cut out unnecessary fat in the diet, stop eating high fat foods like margarine, butter, whipped cream, mayonnaise, salad dressing, Coke, pie, milk shakes, ice cream, and jam. Save these foods for small servings on special occasions.

Some real tips for taking weight off and keeping it off include:

- Drink plenty of water every day, about six to eight (8 oz.) glasses. This will fill you up, cleanse your system, plus keep your skin and hair healthy.
- Diet with a friend, and give each other positive reinforcement.
- Make up a personal eating schedule to follow every day including healthy snacks.

Freeze Instead Of Can

HONESDALE (Wayne Co.) — A very common question in the Wayne County Extension office this time of year is "How long should I can it?"

Unless you are using a recipe from one of the new canning books, the answer Debra Bryant, county extension director, gives folks is "freeze it instead."

She said unless the recipe has been tested by researchers, it's only be guessing at a safe time. And the health and safety of your family isn't something to guess about. If home canned products are hot processed long enough, there is a risk for botulism, a deadly disease.

U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers conduct rigorous tests to determine recommended processing times and pressures. They are based on the food itself, jar size, and type of preparation.

If you are still using an old cookbook, grandma's recipe for spaghetti sauce, or creating your own recipes, your best bet is to freeze these foods.

For example, adding peppers and onions to spice up your home-canned tomato sauce may decrease the acidity of the product

• Try to keep yourself busy, away from the kitchen so that you won't be tempted to eat.

• Make a commitment to losing weight for an extended period of time, only you can do it.

• If you give up a small bag of potato chips each day, in one year you will lose 19 lbs. or one tablespoon of butter daily equals 10 pounds in a year.

enough that a higher heat treatment is needed to destroy the spores of Clostridium botulinum. Without the peppers and onions, the product is acidic enough to keep the bacteria in check.

Freezing keeps all bacteria in check, regardless of the acidity or consistency of the product. It does not kill bacteria, so once the food thaws, bacteria may grow again.

For highest quality during frozen storage, use moisture-vapor-proof packaging materials and store in a freezer that maintains the food at or less than zero degrees Fahrenheit. If your freezer or freezer compartment does not maintain this temperature, limit frozen storage of foods to less than two months.

Pack cooked sauces and chilies into freezer containers to one-half inch of the container's top, seal, label and place in the freezer. Fresh fruits and vegetables require some preparation to ensure high eating quality.

Raw vegetables, except green peppers and onions, maintain a better quality during frozen storage if steamed or water blanched before freezing. This stops the enzymes that cause spoilage and helps retain nutrients and color. After blanching (steaming briefly over or emerging in boiling wa-

ter), submerge vegetables immediately in ice water until they cool to the center. Drain, place in an airtight container and freeze.

Fruits do not need to be blanched. However, light-colored fruits, such as peaches, pears and apples, retain their light color longer during frozen storage if dipped in an ascorbic acid/water mixture before freezing. Use 1 teaspoon crystalline ascorbic acid per cup of cold water or follow directions on commercial mixtures.

If you like your fruits and vegetables frozen in loose-packed bags, place the fruits and drained blanched vegetables on cookie sheets and freeze solid. Transfer to plastic freezer bags.

To prevent your freezer from becoming a dumping ground of strange mystery packages, label products with the name of the food, the type of pack (sugar pack or sugar-free), and date of freezing. Rotate packages and use the oldest ones first. Most fruits, vegetables and sauces maintain high quality for eight to 12 months.

If you would like complete freezing instructions, you may pick up "How to Freeze Foods the Right Way" for \$1.50 at the Wayne County Extension Office, 925 Court St., Honesdale, PA 18431.

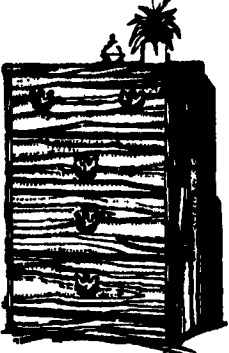
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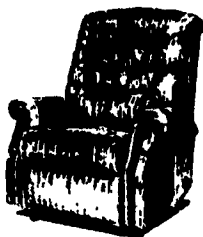
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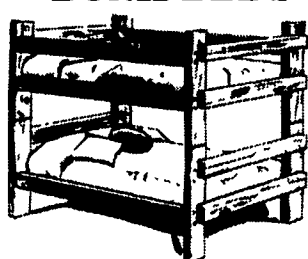
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