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Make every day an Earth Day!

Take charge of your health in quarantine

Months into the New Year, we are already in April, and many of us are trying to access the new resolutions we took as we stepped into 2021. Since we are still in a Pandemic and we must stay home as much as possible, health improvement and diet are one of the most common changes people would like to make at a time like this. As countries take stronger measures to stop the spread of COVID-19, self-quarantine makes a bigger impact on our eating habits. Isolation and staying at home most of the time can trigger unhealthy eating habits due to increased anxiety and stress, meanwhile loss of a daily routine and working from home could limit the movement we usually do during the day. While we are always looking to find ways to cope with boredom, we could be normalizing a more inactive and unhealthy lifestyle.

If you think your diet needs some improvement, you are not alone. Food choices affect how you feel every day. By making healthier choices, you can enable your body to cope with stress and reduce the possibilities of developing health conditions. So, what are some basic steps we can take to maintain a healthy lifestyle while working or studying from home?

- Daily meal plan: having a schedule is always more predictable. Try not to skip a meal when you are busy. Skipping meals can affect your ability to concentrate and can give you a headache and nausea. Meal preparation can really help you to stay on track. Since we spend most of our time at home now, it is harder to find the inspiration to prepare lunch or dinner. To keep everything exciting and organized, try to plan your menu a week in advance, this will help you to know what to buy from the grocery store.



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- Diet and nutrition:
 - **Choose plant based, whole-foods:** making a change by switching from white bread to whole wheat/multi-grain bread will bring you nutritional benefits: such as more fiber, which is great for your digestive system.
 - **Eliminate carbonated beverages:** regular colas and sodas contain large amounts of calories and will trick you into wanting more sugar.
 - **Eat more fruits and veggies:** fruits and vegetables provide a variety of vitamins and minerals that are protective. Eating at least nine servings of fruits and vegetables (with more vegetables than fruit) in your daily diet will ensure a good nutrition intake.
 - **Reduce fat, salt and sugar intake:** excessive consumption of these foods can cause weight gain and increase the risk of numerous health conditions. In order to reduce consumption of fat, you could avoid eating take out and processed foods; avoid snacks that are high in sugar or salt, instead choose to eat raw vegetables, fruit, or unsalted nuts and seeds. Choose unsaturated fats, such as avocado oil.
 - **Drink lots of water:** to maintain good health, adults are advised to drink at least eight glasses of water a day.
 - **Try to incorporate these foods to your diet, as they are known to be immune boosters:** citrusy fruits and red bell peppers are known to be rich in vitamin C; spices such as ginger, garlic and turmeric can be easily added to soups and stir-fry or salad dressings and they are great for the immune system; magnesium rich foods such as legumes, seeds, leafy greens and whole grains will help you feel calm, support immunity and balance your magnesium levels.

- Staying active: public gyms may not be a place to visit during the pandemic, however there are many other ways to get your daily exercises. Aerobics exercises can be easily done at home on a yoga mat. There are many fitness resources available online, you just need to search for it. Staying away from a crowd doesn't have to mean staying away from nature. Going for a quick walk, or jogging outdoors can be a great way to get out of the house and breathe fresh air while



staying active. Try to find green spaces for this activity rather than alongside a street with busy traffic.

- Get a good night's sleep: when there is a routine change, one thing that suffers the most is our sleeping schedule. Try to keep a regular pattern for your sleep schedule and try to get at least eight to nine hours of sleep every night. Getting enough sleep will improve mental health, make you happier and enhance your memory. During these times, it is normal to suffer from insomnia, and there are many helpful meditation resources to help you.

If you would like to keep on track to improve your diet and incorporate a healthy lifestyle, make sure to check out the new *Forks Over Knives* fresh start challenge! This is a 21-day program to get you to adopt a whole-food, plant-based diet by getting you to try one vegan meal at a time. They will send you different recipes for each week and your job is to stay inspired, informed and healthy.

Spending more time indoors, especially now that it's cold outside, we are constantly looking for activities to keep us productive. If you have had your fill of TV shows, there are documentaries that can inspire you to become healthier. To learn more about plant-based living, and how living unhealthy can cause chronic disease such as diabetes, obesity and others, make sure to watch "Eating You Alive" by Paul David Kenamer. Eating You Alive provides facts from nutritionists and medical professors on why most American's are eating unhealthy and how one healthy meal a day can save a life.

When it comes to quarantine, it is easy to fall out of our routine and feel crushed. We are here to remind you that staying in a positive mindset, being mentally and physically healthy will help us get through these unfortunate periods of time. We encourage you to take advantage of this self-isolation and focus on yourself to become better, and healthier. Create a new routine, take care of yourself and stay safe!

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