EAT MORE! FRUIT & VEGETABLE Meal Planner

Less than 15 percent of Americans consume the recommended daily minimum of fruits and vegetables. What gets in the way? It’s often busy schedules and the lure of junk food. Take it meal by meal:

BREAKFAST

- **Mix** chopped spinach, mushrooms, peppers or onions into your omelet.
- **Top** waffles or cereal with sliced peaches or berries. Add applesauce or shredded carrots to homemade muffins.
- **Make** a quick smoothie: Blend frozen fruit with juice, milk or yogurt.
- **Enjoy** toast with peanut butter and sliced banana.

LUNCH

- **Add** grilled mushrooms, baby greens or sprouts to your sandwich.

DINNER

- **Savor** pureed vegetable soup made from winter squash or carrots, or buy tomato soup and mix in cooked veggies.
- **Pack** some guacamole, pureed red pepper dip or hummus along with pita bread.

Satisfying snacks:
- Feed your cravings — crunchy, salty or sweet — with a variety of produce such as crisp cucumbers, a few olives or frozen seedless grapes.

Change Your Diet, Change Your Genes?

It turns out that there’s more to our genes than the DNA we inherit from our parents. The effect of genes can be dialed up or down through epigenomic marks, which are chemical compounds attached to the genes. Evidence is mounting that we can influence these marks to prevent disease. This lends more support to healthy lifestyle recommendations.

What’s being studied? It’s whether or not environmental factors (pollutants, stress and nutrition) have a rapid, powerful effect on gene expression and health. In one study, eating leafy greens or taking a multivitamin caused a cancer-suppressing gene to stay active. New treatments will target the epigenetic switches, such as decitabine, a drug that has produced improvement or remission in three-quarters of the patients with a cancer known as myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS).

The epigenome can be modified during a person’s lifetime. Some epigenomic marks will fade once an environmental trigger is removed; others may be passed on to future generations through egg and sperm cells.

The takeaway? Better understanding of this process has the potential to greatly increase our control over health in ourselves and our offspring.

Women: How do you know if you have premenstrual syndrome?

(continued on next page)
How Do You Know If You Have Premenstrual Syndrome?

Most women experience some symptoms of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) during their monthly cycles. Physical and emotional symptoms often start five to 11 days before menstruation and end sometime after flow begins. During this time, a woman may experience:

- Headaches
- Weight gain or swelling of ankles, feet or hands
- Breast tenderness
- Nausea, bloating, bowel changes, abdominal discomfort or food cravings
- Backache, muscles spasms
- Fatigue, loss of sex drive
- Confusion, depression, anxiety, forgetfulness
- Irritability, hostility or aggressive behavior

PMS is not diagnosed by a lab test but rather by taking note of your symptoms. Often these problems can be reduced or eliminated by:

- **Exercising** vigorously for 30 minutes most days of the week.
- **Avoiding** alcohol, caffeine, sugar, salty foods and smoking.
- **Getting** plenty of sleep and managing stress with yoga, progressive muscle relaxation or deep breathing.
- **Taking** supplements including calcium, magnesium, folic acid and vitamins B6, D and E. Work out a specific plan with your doctor.
- **Eating** small, frequent meals featuring whole grains, vegetables and fruits.

Those with severe PMS symptoms may need other targeted treatments from their health care provider. That might consist of medication for bloating, sleep problems, fatigue or depression.

**Noteworthy:** For a printable chart of related symptoms, go to www.womenshealth.gov and type in “PMS.”

Recovering After Surgery (continued)

**The Need: LOOKING FOR DANGER SIGNS**

Major concerns the first few days after surgery include bleeding and heart or lung problems. Infections and blood clots may occur later. Follow wound care and treatment recommendations, and call 911 for signs of shock such as dizziness, fainting, clammy skin, sweating, shallow breathing, anxiety or confusion. Rapid heartbeat, chest pain, difficulty breathing, severe pain or leg swelling also warrant an emergency call.

Following surgery, reactions that require medical follow-up include:

- **Rash** or excessive itching
- **Inability to hold down fluids** or food; difficulty swallowing
- **Difficulty urinating** or having a bowel movement; black, tarry stools
- **Persistent or increased pain** even after taking pain medication
- **Redness, bleeding or opening** of the incision; pus draining from the wound
- **Fever** over 101°F
- **A decrease in function** or change in the level of consciousness

**NEXT MONTH: WHEN WEIGHT-LOSS MEASURES FAIL**

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**STRESS: 5 Secrets of Resilient People**

1. **Stay connected with others.** Support and help can come from family, friends, spiritual advisors or even your co-workers.
2. **Be kind to yourself.** Take care of your physical and emotional needs, and be realistic about what you can do. Accept your flaws and limitations. Having a purpose or goal can help you get through tough times.
3. **Stay upbeat.** Remember that the situation may improve with time, and maintain your sense of humor to keep things in perspective.
4. **Roll with the punches.** Life is full of changes and surprises. If you expect them and accept them, the ride will be a lot smoother.
5. **Do something.** Take action to make the situation better. Being active — not simply waiting for things to improve — may help you feel in control.

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**WELL CONNECTIONS:** Take a QuikRisk™ Self Assessment at www.personalbest.com/extras/july10ergo.