

A Spirit-Led Medical Doctor's 6 Insightful Tips for Your Journey Toward Divine Health

March is National Nutrition Month and this year's theme is "Put Your Best Fork Forward." The theme, determined by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, is meant to empower individuals with the autonomy to take control of their eating habits, one forkful at a time. Big changes can be difficult and are often unsustainable. However, when we recognize that every small daily decision can add up to make a big difference, we can gradually implement healthy habits that move us closer to a healthier and happier life.

Here are six tips to help you put your best fork forward:

1. Focus on Foods You Enjoy

No, this doesn't mean that you should eat more doughnuts and pizza. However, you can identify which health-promoting foods you find the most pleasurable to consume and eat more of those. This way you start to create positive associations with eating healthy and begin to look forward to it more and more.

2. Cook Your Meals

When you cook your own food, you develop a deeper connection to the food on your plate and a greater appreciation for the nourishment it provides. You are more thoroughly invested in your meals. For many people, it is not practical to cook every meal at home, but make it a priority when you can. Maybe it is once a day or maybe just once a week. Whatever you can manage will make a difference.

3. Moderation is Key

A square of organic dark chocolate isn't going to kill you. In

fact, in may confer health benefits. A whole bar of chocolate, however, will spike your blood sugar and leave you craving for more.

When eating meals, eat slowly and pay attention to when you begin to feel full. You don't always have to finish everything on your plate. A good rule of thumb is to stop eating when you feel about two-thirds full. This will help you avoid feeling bloated and tired after your meal.

4. Move Daily

Even the best dietary decisions won't be able to compensate for a sedentary lifestyle. This doesn't mean you have to hit the gym every day, though. You can sprinkle in movement breaks throughout your day. Go for a brisk walk after lunch. Take short stretching breaks between activities. Change positions throughout the day. If you are usually sitting, stand for a while, and vice versa. Small, simple bouts of movement throughout the day can be just as—or even more—effective than a straight hour of hitting it hard in the gym.

5. Consult a Professional

With a deluge of often conflicting nutritional advice scattered across the internet, it can be difficult to determine what a healthy lifestyle actually looks like for you. That is why it can be invaluable to seek out expert guidance. By working with a credible authority, you can develop a personalized plan that fits your individual constitution and lifestyle. The support and direction offered by working directly with a practitioner can be the key to lasting results.

6. Pay Attention to Quality

Should you cut out gluten? Maybe. But it is important to recognize that there is a huge difference between a processed supermarket white bread filled with preservatives and

hydrogenated oils and a fresh-baked whole wheat organic sourdough loaf with only three ingredients. The former might cause havoc on your digestion, while the latter serves as a valuable addition to a healthy diet. Similarly, fresh and locally grown organic produce will contain quantifiably higher nutrient density in addition to being better for the environment and the economy.

Start off with the one tip that seems most practical for you to implement in your life. Remember that perfection is unattainable. Approach these tips with compassion and grace. Rome wasn't built in a day, and you won't be able to completely overhaul your lifestyle overnight. Small steps every day will gradually lead to amazing results. All you need to do is make a conscious decision to move in the right direction and be gentle, yet disciplined, with yourself when you "fall off the wagon."

Happy National Nutrition Month; here's to putting your best fork forward! {eoa}

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