

MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES: WEEK 22

Experiment

If you're willing to continually try new approaches to helping you and your family make healthy choices, you'll eventually find things that work. But you have to be willing to make mistakes. It is okay to try something even if you are not sure it will work. Sometimes doing the wrong thing leads to finding out what the right thing is. This can keep you motivated even when you make mistakes. With this in mind, choosing to experiment is one of the healthiest choices you can make.

Quick fixes and fad diets may seem like a good idea at first, but they're awfully hard to stick with. Creating realistic short-term goals that are a part of a long-term healthy lifestyle plan is more effective. Next week's newsletter will focus on goal-setting in more detail.

Experiment with your environment

We're all influenced by our environment, so if you and your family want to make healthy choices, it's important to make sure your home environment supports those choices. For example, if you don't want to eat specific foods, try keeping them out of the house. In an ideal environment, the healthy choice is the easy choice and there's nothing easier than choosing to not eat candy that isn't there. If banishing candy isn't an option, try storing it in a cabinet or drawer so you can't see it and aren't constantly reminded of it. Try keeping fruits and vegetables out in the open where they're easy to see and easy to grab instead.

Did you know?

You are more likely to choose nutritious snacks when they are stored at eye-level in the fridge. Keep in mind that eye-level for your kids may be lower than it is for you. Make sure they can easily see their nutritious snack options, too.



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Experiment with new foods

You might hesitate to spend money on new foods that you aren't sure you and your family will like. Organizing a potluck where everyone brings a dish that they like but that is unfamiliar to the others at the party is a great way to try new foods without the scary price tag. Try to coordinate the dishes to make sure that the majority of the group hasn't tried them before. Ask the cooks to bring copies of their recipes so that everyone can try the new dishes at home.

Experiment with planning

Planning all of your weekly meals ahead of time is one way to avoid a time crunch that can make you feel like you have to choose fast food, but it's not the only way. Try planning just the protein source for each of your weekly meals ahead of time. That gives you time to thaw any frozen meat, poultry or seafood, and then choose a specific recipe that day based on the other foods you have on hand.



MSU Extension programming has something to offer every member of your family

Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge and resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities and businesses.

To help you be healthy at every stage of life, MSU Extension delivers affordable, relevant, evidence-based education to serve the needs of adults, youth and families in urban and rural communities. Programs focus on helping you gain the skills you need to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods, increase your physical activity and stretch your food dollars.

MSU Extension's children and youth programs address needs and issues from birth through age 19, providing parents with educational resources related to your child's development and giving youth the opportunity through 4-H programs to build leadership and teach practical life skills.

For more information or to join a class, contact your local MSU Extension county office or visit www.msue.msu.edu.

FIND YOUR LOCAL MSU EXTENSION COUNTY OFFICE

With a presence in every Michigan county, Extension faculty and staff members provide tools to live and work better. From a personal meeting to information online, MSU Extension educators work every day to provide the most current information when people need it to ensure success – in the workplace, at home and in the community.

To find your local county office visit msue.msu.edu/county.

Acknowledgements

Developed by Erin E. Powell, MS, RDN; Tom Cummins; Elizabeth Dorman and Denise Aungst, MS; for MSU Extension. Based on a concept created by Denise Aungst and Layne Schlicher for MSU Extension. Produced by ANR Creative for MSU Extension.



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