

A Special Section Focusing on Senior Lifestyles

SUN CURRENT

MATURE Lifestyles

Health & Wellness

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Intriguing possibilities for better nutrition



Photo illustration

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and Adult Involvement manager with Edina Community Education.

Classes being taught by instructors from Nutritional Weight and Wellness include one on balanced foods and another called "Jump Start Your Metabolism."

Dar Kvist, director of Nutritional Weight and Wellness, points out that nutrition affects memory, bone health and energy.

"Most seniors are not aware that what they put in their mouths makes a huge difference in how they feel," Kvist said. "It affects every one of our systems."

Kvist talks about the importance of food on "Dishing Up Nutrition," her Saturday morning radio show on 107.1

FM. She also meets with clients individually.

"One of my clients is 93, and her daughter knows that if her mom eats right, it will keep her out of a nursing home," Kvist said.

A 73-year-old client, who was on 12 different medications and whose balance had been affected, changed her eating so much that she no longer needs to take medications for blood pressure, diabetes, sleeping and mood alteration.

"She has lost 73 pounds, works out almost every day, and her balance and mood (are) great," Kvist said. "Food makes such a difference in every way."

One female client, a 66-year-old teacher, found that nutrition counseling

allowed her to get her cholesterol and blood pressure numbers down, and gave her the energy she needed to continue teaching.

"If you go to work at 5:30 a.m., you need protein, like a couple of eggs and a strip or two of bacon without nitrates," Kvist said. "We try to get people off processed carbohydrates. Instead of toast, why not half a sweet potato with real butter? A lot of people eat a pork chop for breakfast and feel great."

She notes that many senior citizens grew up on farms or went to the farm to visit grandparents. They likely ate organic eggs, chickens raised without

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If it's true that we are what we eat, many of us could stand some improvement.

Some intriguing possibilities for better nutrition are available through Edina's Community Education offerings for 2014.

"We are really taking a 'whole person' approach to health and wellness ... for after the New Year, and are offering classes to keep mind, body and spirit engaged with everything from health and wellness, fitness, creative fitness, crafts and hobbies, and professional learning," said Cheryl Gunness, the Community

Nutrition

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chemicals, and real butter.

Still working 70 hours a week at the age of 75 with what she calls "incredible energy," Kvist said she regularly eats vegetables for breakfast.

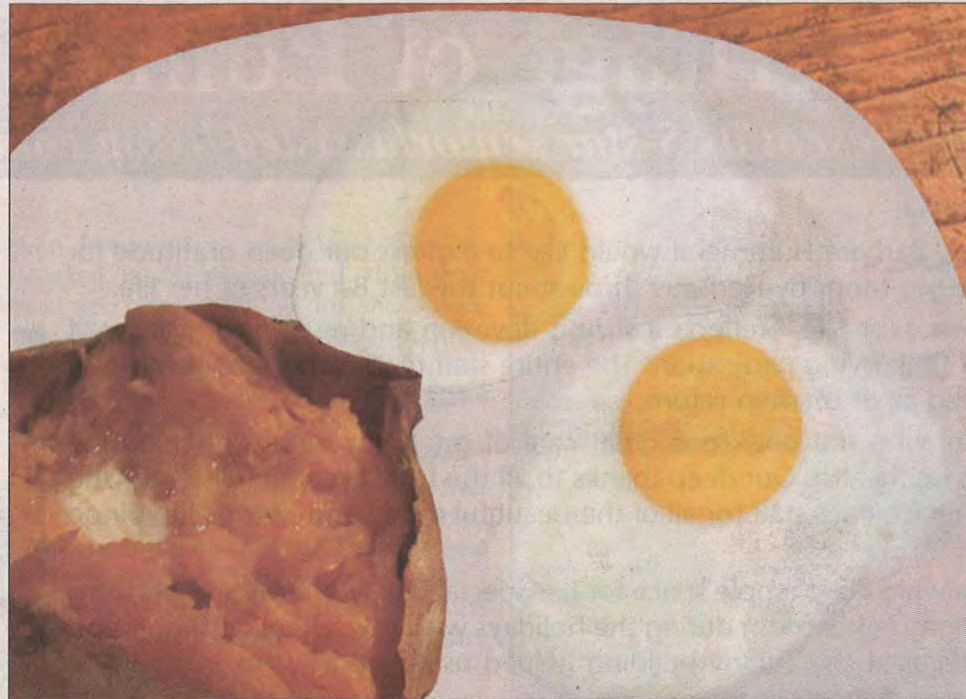
"People who eat vegetables for breakfast say it's the best thing they've ever done; they come off feeling so good," she said. "Once they pull out the processed food, their inflammations go down and they have fewer aches and pains. Once you reduce processed carbs and sugar, your knees won't hurt so much."

Another tip is to eat something with a little fat content at night, such as strawberries with a little real cream, she said.

"Your blood sugar will be stable and you'll sleep all night," Kvist said. "You need some good fat every time you eat to keep your brain working."

Good fats include olives, avocados, nuts and butter, according to Kvist.

Another idea for nutritional change is presented in an Edina Community Education class called "Jump Start Your Health with Green Smoothies." The class is taught by Kris Roach, a certified



Eggs and sweet potato with real butter constitute a protein/vegetable breakfast that will stick with you until lunchtime. (Submitted photo)

holistic health coach, and Emily Wert, a certified wellness specialist.

"You need to have the right blender," Roach said. "It's a great way to get in a whole bunch of nutrition and minerals.

It's different than juicing."

She suggests using a variety of leafy greens like spinach, kale or broccoli, plus liquid, ice and a small amount of sweetener, such as dates, banana or honey.

For a creamy orange Dreamsicle-like smoothie, she suggests a handful of greens, vanilla almond milk, and two oranges.

"It will turn out bright green, but it will taste like fruit," Roach said.

For people who live alone and don't want to cook, she suggests going back to the basics by using fresh food rather than processed food that comes in a box or a can.

"If you've been eating from your pantry for a long time, your taste buds have been hijacked," Roach said.

You might have to try a food three or four times to give it a chance to grow on you, Roach said.

"People sometimes are like kids; they give up too soon," she said.

One easy tip is to go through the salad bar at your local supermarket and buy a small portion of vegetables, such as broccoli, that can be quickly steamed and paired up with a chicken breast, a small piece of salmon or a pork chop.

"Keep variety in your diet," Roach said. "Be careful not to just open a can of soup. Your immune system is only as good as what you put in your body. Eat what comes from the ground - a real apple instead of applesauce."