



LNP 175

Five Small Diet Changes You Can Make for a Big Impact on Your Health

Are you at your wit's end with diets that haven't produced results worth talking about? You might find one that lets you lose a couple of pounds, but then they come right back. So where have your diet changes gotten you? Unfortunately, right back where you started.

This is Pat Iyer with *Iyer's Insights*, one of our twice weekly Legal Nurse Podcasts designed to help you in all facets of your LNC life.

In Dorci Hill's show, which was LNP 174, she discussed the impact of eating on your health. Many of us are on a dieting rollercoaster. The good news is you can very easily make some changes that will let you get off that diet roller coaster for good!

I'm going to talk first about four small diet changes that pack a lot of punch and focus on one big one:

1. **Make water your beverage of choice.** Even the beverages that claim to have zero sugar are often loaded with calories or unhealthy chemicals! Remember Dorci referring to counting your chemicals? Replace those beverages with pure water and you'll start to notice changes in how you feel and look almost instantly!
 - Give your water a kick by squeezing some fresh lime juice into each glass you drink.
 - Buy a beverage container that has a defuser. This is a plastic insert that sits inside the water bottle. It has openings in it. I fill mine with crushed raspberries sliced limes, sliced strawberries or sliced oranges. The flavor diffuses into the water. You can refill the water container several times before the flavor no longer comes from the fruit. Your reward is a nice fruit flavor without chemicals.
 - Try not to quit sugared drinks cold turkey or you may end up feeling deprived. Instead, treat yourself to a soda or fruit beverage at the end of each week if you met your daily water consumption targets.

- Drinking a glass of water before meals also helps you to feel full quicker so you don't eat as much food.
2. **Cut down your portions.** It's possible to cut portion sizes without leaving the table feeling hungry. Sometimes, *timing makes all the difference:*
 - A plan that may work well for you is to eat five times a day – breakfast, lunch, dinner, and two snacks in between. Have small portions so your total daily consumption still falls within your recommended caloric intake.
 - When you eat so often, your body never has a chance to feel really hungry, so you're not as tempted to eat substantial portions.
 3. **Switch snacks.** While it's important to indulge in comfort from time to time, you may want to assess whether the snacks you're eating are the healthiest options.
 - For example, if you like candy bars, try replacing them with cereal bars, fruit or fruit salad, yogurt, Jell-O with fruit, frozen fruit bars, and other snacks with less sugar and fat. Fruit is nature's candy - you'll still get to satisfy your craving for sweets, but in a healthier way.
 - If you prefer crunchy snacks like chips, opt for crunchy raw veggies or nuts.
 - *One trick that works is to prepare snacks ahead of time* so they're ready whenever you're hungry for a quick snack. Cut up celery, carrots, and broccoli into easy "grab and eat" portions. Cut up several kinds of fruits, make tasty fruit salads with melons, grapes, berries and more, and store in portion-sized sealed containers.
 4. **Skip the sides.** Sides like potato salad, macaroni and cheese and stuffing could be your downfall. *While you're allowed to indulge a little, remember that these have the highest caloric values.* Eat only lesser amounts of these sides while you fill up on the meats, vegetables, and fruits for dessert.

Be aware that rice and potatoes produce sugar in your body. Give them a wide berth.

If you adapt these simple diet changes, it will just be a matter of time before you see remarkable changes in your fitness. Your body will respond automatically because you'll be treating it to the things it loves – healthy alternatives!

So instead of jumping from one fad diet to the other in search of the best fitness and weight loss results, try making some simple changes to how and what you eat. ***Not only will you look better and get the results you're looking for, but you'll also feel better throughout the course of each day.***



Before we continue with the show. I want to ask your listeners a few questions. Do you struggle with getting fit?

- Does the bag of chocolate in the cabinet call to you?
- Does the ice cream in the freezer speak your name?
- Would you rather eat an Oreo than a carrot?
- Does the idea of going to the gym for getting fit seem less interesting than watching a movie?

If you answer “yes” to these questions, you are singing my song. I interviewed Mike Schatzki to talk with him about how as a middle age overweight male he was able to get into shape. His story may surprise you. I think it will inspire you. The program is called *Couch Potatoes: Secrets of Getting Fit*. We have the audio recording and transcript for you at <http://LNC.tips/couch> and as always, offer you a 25% discount if you use the code Listened in the coupon box during check out.

Let's return to the show.

The Fifth Change: Ease Your Way into Going Vegetarian

Perhaps you find the benefits of a vegetarian diet interesting but wonder if you're ready to go completely meat free. ***Taking a gradual approach gives you room to plan for your nutritional needs and find strategies that work for you.***

I've been mostly vegetarian for more than 25 years. I say mostly vegetarian because I do eat fish or chicken on occasion when I eat out. We don't cook any meat or fish at home.

Some Reasons to Consider a Vegetarian Lifestyle

1. **Reduce your environmental footprint.** Raising animals for food consumes a lot more energy and other natural resources than growing plants for food. By eating vegetarian meals, you help cut back on greenhouse gas emissions.
2. **Enjoy cruelty free products.** The cruelty-free movement is growing as many people become concerned with livestock rearing practices. *A vegetarian diet is one way to express compassion for other creatures.*
3. **Lower your risk for certain diseases.** *Studies show that going meatless can have impressive health benefits.* Vegetarian diets have been associated with lower rates of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancers of the prostate and colon. Vegetarians also tend to have lower cholesterol levels and blood pressure. This is the reason my husband and I became vegetarian. I discovered that his risk of having a recurrence of his colon and prostate cancer was lower if he was vegetarian.
4. **Lose weight.** As a group, vegetarians are also less likely to be overweight and they carry less body fat. You may take off some unwanted pounds just by cutting back on meat. This also should be coupled with reducing carbohydrate intake. It does not reduce weight to eat a diet heavy in pasta, so you can avoid meat. Trust me on that.

Making Vegetarian Eating Nutritious

1. **Get the protein you need.** Plant and dairy foods can provide you with all the protein you require. You can even get this essential dietary element from plant foods alone.
 - Most Americans consume more protein than they need. Eat a variety of foods, such as beans and rice for their complementary proteins. Contrary to the old conventional wisdom, complementary foods work equally well eaten separately or when combined in one meal.

2. **Learn about other key nutrients.** There are a few nutrients which merit special attention for vegans and vegetarians. Supplements or fortified foods can help you get the iron, calcium, zinc and vitamins B12 and D that you need on a regular basis. I take B12 once a week.
3. **Understand your child's nutritional needs.** Your doctor can advise you on supplements you may need if you're raising an infant or child on a vegetarian or vegan diet. Keep in mind that children under two usually thrive best without any fat restrictions in their diets. Both of my sons are vegetarian now. They were teenagers when I stopped cooking meat.

Gradual Steps Towards Vegetarian Eating

1. **Eat more vegetarian meals.** Try scheduling meat-free days each week. Over time, you may drop meat all together. Alternatively, you could reserve meat for dinner only. If you eat out, look at the menus in advance. Some restaurants are much better than others in providing vegetarian options.
2. **Adjust your portions.** Start looking at meat as way to add flavor rather than as the centerpiece of a meal. Meat tends to be strongly flavored, so using it as a condiment is always a possibility.
3. **Experiment with new recipes.** Browse online or visit your local library for vegetarian and vegan cookbooks. It's easy to get scared by those tofu hot dogs that look like they've been in the supermarket freezer for decades. You'll feel better when you see all the fresh and delicious alternatives like spicy red lentil soup or cauliflower roasted in olive oil and garlic. Avoid the artificial soy foods that are loaded with chemicals.
4. **Reach out for support.** Enlist the whole family in going vegetarian. Talk with your kids about why it's important. Check around your community for local vegetarian groups that may offer restaurant suggestions and cooking classes.
5. **Integrate your diet into your lifestyle.** *You'll have an easier time sticking to your new diet if you approach it as one element in a healthier and more compassionate way of living.* Your motivation will remain strong and your new habits will take root more firmly.

Vegetarian eating can be healthy and delicious. Try these tips to start off gradually and use your diet as part of a lifestyle focused on keeping your family healthy and making choices that are good for the whole planet.

After you stop listening to this interview, be sure to go over to <http://LNC.tips/couch> to order your 60-minute interview and transcript of *Couch Potatoes: Secrets of Getting Fit*.

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