

Your guide to... healthy living

This issue is all about
how to eat a healthy diet



The Nutrition Issue

*It's never too late to
start eating RIGHT!*

Read how **Brinley Skorbinsky (on the left)** changed his unhealthy eating habits when he learnt he was diabetic...

BRINLEY'S STORY

BY THANDIE CHUMA

Brinley is a retired panel beater, and a diabetic. We are sitting in his lovely kitchen chatting, while his wife, Joyce, makes us tea. As I add two teaspoons of sugar to my tea, I notice that Brinley doesn't add any. Almost as if he is reading my mind he says, "I take my tea without sugar now. The way I ate had to change when I found out that I was diabetic".

According to Brinley, he used to overeat. "I used to enjoy my six doughnuts and tea with sugar in the mornings, I ate take-aways for lunch and I had two big plates of food at supper time", he says. But all that had to change when he was diagnosed with diabetes. He was given a diet sheet, which explained all the foods that he had to cut out and the foods that he should eat more of. "It was very difficult at first to get used to the lifestyle change, especially the diet part. But with the support of my wife, I succeeded." When Brinley says



"I used to eat six doughnuts every morning with tea and three sugars and I used to eat take-aways with the guys at work every day. I put on lots of weight and paid the price by getting diabetes"

this, his wife Joyce also chaps in, "I decided that everyone, the children and myself, would eat the same food as my husband, so we could support him."

Meals in the couple's home are now much healthier. Joyce says that she uses only a little oil to cook

Chronic diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke) and cancer can be prevented if you eat a healthy diet and keep physically active.

Increasing numbers of South Africans, including children, are eating an unhealthy diet which is high in fat, salt and sugar, and at the same time are not getting enough exercise. As a result, more and more of us are becoming overweight or obese and are suffering from high cholesterol, high blood pressure and high blood sugar levels. These are all important risk factors for chronic disease.

South African nutrition experts have developed guidelines to help us understand how to eat more healthily (see overleaf). These guidelines are suitable for adults, as well as for children who are 5 years and older. It is especially important to teach our children to eat healthily from a young age as this will protect them from getting chronic diseases in adulthood. If you already have a chronic disease, following these guidelines will help you control your condition and feel better.

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LATEST INFO



PERSONAL STORIES



USEFUL TIPS



REACH YOUR GOALS

Get updated on the latest information, pick up some useful tips and read interesting personal stories about how others have managed to achieve their health goals.

The benefits of a healthy diet:

- Your immune system is stronger
- You get sick less often
- You miss fewer days of work
- You save money on fewer doctor's visits and medicines
- You have more energy
- You are more likely to maintain a healthy weight
- You can concentrate and learn more easily
- Your skin, hair and nails all look better
- Your teeth are stronger
- You reduce your risk of getting diabetes, hypertension, cancer and heart disease

Did you know??

Over 90% of cancers are caused by environmental and lifestyle factors. Only 10% are caused by hereditary factors

(Cancer Association of SA: www.cansa.org.co.za)

What is a healthy balanced meal?

The plate below is a visual guide to show you how much of each food group you should be eating in order to have a healthy, balanced diet. Ideally, you should eat 3 small meals a day, with healthy snacks between meals.



- Half your plate should consist of vegetables, salads or fruit
- A quarter of your plate should consist of high-fibre starchy foods (e.g. brown rice, wholewheat pasta, coarse mielie meal or pap, sweet potato, madumbi or brown/wholewheat/seeded bread)
- The other quarter of your plate should consist of lean protein (e.g. fish, skinless chicken or lean meat, beans or lentils)
- The meal should also contain a small serving of fat (e.g. vegetable oil, soft margarine, avocado or unsalted nuts)

Healthy Snacks

Choose healthy snacks between meals to keep up your energy throughout the day:

- Fresh fruit or fruit salad (without added sugar)
- Low-fat/fat-free yoghurt or low-fat maas
- Unsalted nuts, raisins or other dried fruit
- Raw vegetables (e.g. cucumber, carrots, celery)
- Home-made microwave popcorn with no added salt, artificial flavourings or butter
- Wholegrain crackers with thinly spread peanut butter, low-fat/fat-free cottage cheese or avocado

👉 Story continued from cover page

food and she makes sure fresh vegetables and fruits are always plentiful. She says that most of the foods that she now buys are the healthier options, like brown bread instead of white bread, and more chicken and fish than red meat. She also makes sure that everyone's food portions are not too big, especially Brinley's. Brinley says, "I am lucky I have the support of my daughters and my wife. I honestly don't think I could have made the adjustments on my own." Joyce smiles shyly and says, "I used to bake the doughnuts and the biscuits that he used to

overindulge in. Now, I don't bake these unhealthy treats anymore, because I don't want to tempt him."

It is very clear that husband and wife are on the same page when it comes to healthy eating. They also mention that they feel particularly lucky because three of their daughters are in the health field and they provide them with lots of information on diabetes management. "The children watch their father like a hawk. If he wants to eat something that he shouldn't eat, they will take it away," Joyce chuckles. Brinley adds, "I am used to it now, so I am more in control than I used to be".

When asked how he manages to be so self-disciplined he says, "it is difficult, but with the right mind-

set and if you live in a home where you get encouragement, you can control yourself." He adds that faith has also played a central role in his life. Joyce agrees. "Everything is possible when you have faith. God gives you strength," Joyce says.

When asked what health benefits they have experienced as a result of eating more healthily, Brinley beams and says, "I have lost a lot of weight. I used to be a size 42 and now I am a size 32. My wife has also lost some weight, and she never gets sick, it's amazing." Joyce nods to affirm what Brinley has just said. She adds with a smile, "A healthier diet makes you feel lighter and more energetic as well." ❤️

CONTROLLING YOUR PORTION SIZE

Remember that controlling the amount of food you eat at every meal is an important way to lose weight or to avoid putting it on. These suggestions may help you:

Use a smaller plate and don't overfill it

Decrease your portion sizes gradually over time, so you don't notice it as much

Fill half your plate with vegetables or salad

Dish up only once and avoid having second helpings

Eat more slowly and chew your food properly

Don't finish your childrens' leftovers

Sit down at the table and eat with your family

Don't watch TV while you eat

If your plate usually looks like this, you are eating way TOO MUCH!



A healthier portion would look like this...



Would you like to find out how healthily you and your family eat?

A healthy diet includes plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables and high-fibre foods (like beans, lentils, wholewheat bread, oats) and is low in fat, sugar and salt. Doing the quiz below, will help you assess how healthy your eating habits really are.

FOOD QUIZ:

DO YOU USUALLY...?	YES	NO
Choose wholewheat or brown bread and flour, rather than white bread or flour?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have at least 3 portions of vegetables a day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have at least 2 portions of fruits a day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choose fat-free or low fat dairy, like milk, maas or yoghurt?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eat red meat (like mutton, beef or boerewors) less than 3 times a week?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Include dried or tinned beans, split peas, lentils or soya in your meals at least twice a week?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remove all visible fat from meat before you eat it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remove the skin from chicken before you cook it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avoid eating high-fat foods such as chips, viennas, polony or chocolate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eat fish at least twice a week?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avoid eating takeaways or street foods like doughnuts, pies, vetkoek, samoosas, fried chips, fried chicken, gatsbies or 'kotas'?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Try to cook with less oil and avoid deep-frying foods?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avoid salty foods like polony, bacon, viennas, crisps, salty biscuits and high salt sauces, like soya sauce or barbeque sauce?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avoid adding extra salt to your food at the table?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Try to avoid adding high-salt ingredients like soup powders, stock cubes or salty seasonings to your food?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choose healthier snacks like fruit, vegetables, low-fat or fat-free yoghurt for between meals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use soft tub margarine for your bread, rather than butter or brick margarine?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avoid drinking sugary cold drinks or juices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limit drinking alcohol to no more than 1 (women) or 2 (men) drinks per day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you ticked "No" for any of the questions, your (and your family's) diet can be improved.

The more "No" answers you ticked, the more unhealthy your diet is. You will have a higher risk of getting a chronic disease, or having serious complications if you already have a chronic condition. You need to think about changing your diet to improve your overall health. The healthy eating guidelines on the following page will help you.

If you ticked "Yes" for some or most questions, you are making good progress, but can still benefit by making some changes to your eating habits.

If you ticked "Yes" for every question - well done! You are well on your way to preventing chronic disease (or keeping it well under control if you already have one) because you are choosing healthier options and avoiding the unhealthy foods eaten by many South Africans.



HEALTHY EAT

Remember, every small step can help us eventually achieve our big goals.

Healthy eating does not need to be boring or expensive. The truth is that it can be as simple as making small changes to the way you eat, like eating more of this and less of that, or using healthier cooking methods. The following tips will help you and your family to eat healthily.



Have low-fat milk, maas or yoghurt every day.

Dairy products are an excellent source of calcium and are important for healthy bones and teeth.

They can also help prevent high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis and heart disease. Choose low-fat or fat-free products and reduced-fat cheeses instead of full cream dairy.

Enjoy a variety of food.

Eating lots of different types of food will give your body all the nutrients it needs. The more colourful your plate of food, the more variety you will have.



Add less salt to your food and avoid processed foods high in salt.



Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure and increase your risk of stroke, heart attack and cancer. Some salt in our diets comes from salt added at the table or during cooking, but more than half the salt we eat comes from processed foods.

Examples of high salt foods are: stock cubes, soup powders, chips, crisps and processed meats like polony and viennas. Salt intake should not be more than one teaspoon of salt a day from all sources. Substituting salt with spices, herbs and lemon juice will help you cut down on the amount of salt you eat. If you gradually add less salt to your food, you will soon not notice the difference.



Eat less sugar and avoid food or drinks high in sugar.

Too much sugar can make you gain weight, increasing your risk of chronic disease. Sugar in your diet can come from sugar added to hot drinks, cereals and cooking, but very high amounts of sugar are also found in cakes, biscuits, doughnuts, sweets, chocolates and sweetened cold drinks and fruit juices. Many processed foods have hidden sugar in them, labelled as sucrose, fructose or glucose. If you are diabetic, it is even more important that you limit these types of foods.



Try to eat five portions of vegetables and fruit a day.

Adding lots of vegetables to soups and stews can help you reach the target of 5 portions. Remember to eat fruit and vegetables from the different colour groups and to include some raw fruit and vegetables in your daily diet. The vitamins, minerals and fibre in these foods protect against many diseases.

Eat less fat and use the healthier type of fats or oils.

Eating too many fats and fried foods can make you gain weight and cause heart disease. Decrease the amount of fatty red meat, butter, hard margarine, cream, lard and ghee that you eat. The high amounts of saturated fats in these foods can increase your cholesterol and block your blood vessels, which can lead to a heart attack or stroke. Rather use good (unsaturated) fats like sunflower or canola oil and soft tub margarines in small amounts, and include nuts, seeds, peanut butter and avocados in your diet. An easy way to cut down on saturated fat is to always remove the visible fat from meat and the skin from chicken.



ING GUIDELINES



Drink plenty of clean, safe water every day.

You need about 6 to 8 glasses of water a day. Most of this can come from tap water, but drinks such as tea, coffee or fruit juice mixed with water can count as well.

Eat dried beans, split peas, lentils or soya at least twice a week.

These foods are good, affordable sources of protein, are low in fat and high in fibre. Replacing meat in some meals with these foods will benefit your health.



If you drink alcohol, control the amount you drink.

Drinking alcohol has been linked to various cancers, including cancer of the throat, breast, colon, liver and prostate. It is recommended that women should not have more than one drink a day and men not more than two drinks a day. One drink is equal to a can of beer (340 ml) or a small glass of wine (120 ml) or a tot of spirits (25 ml). If you are diabetic or have hypertension, it is best to avoid drinking alcohol altogether, as it can raise your blood sugar and blood pressure. Pregnant and breastfeeding women should also not drink any alcohol at all, as it can cause serious damage to the baby's growing brain.



Small portions of chicken, fish, meat or eggs can be eaten every day.

It is best to limit eating red meat to only a few times a week. When choosing chicken or red meat, choose lean options. Try to eat at least one vegetarian main meal and two fish meals a week. Good options are fresh or tinned pilchards, snoek, sardines or tuna. Eggs are also a good, and more affordable, alternative source of protein to meat.



Make high-fibre starchy foods part of most meals.

Eating high-fibre food helps you feel fuller for longer, lowers your cholesterol and keeps your digestive system healthy. High-fibre foods lower your risk of developing obesity, heart disease and cancer. Good examples are brown or wholewheat bread, coarse maize meal (pap), oats and brown rice.



Use healthy cooking methods.

Avoid deep frying your food. Grilling, steaming, microwaving, slow-cooking and baking are much healthier cooking methods. If you do fry your food, stir-fry or pan-fry using only a little oil.





Read about how Nonofo (above, pictured on holiday in Cape Town) tried to raise her children to like healthy food...

“I decided to eat healthily because I wanted to become a good role model for my children.”

NONOFO'S STORY

BY THANDIE CHUMA

Nonofo has been a mother for 28 years, and for all of those years, she has tried to make sure that her family has eaten healthily; something that she says has not always been easy. “The lifestyle nowadays makes it difficult. The food that we eat is nothing like the food that we, my generation, grew up eating. It’s all junk food now or processed foods”. But she persevered. She was determined that her children would grow up in a home with a culture of healthy eating.

Nonofo says, “I don’t serve a meal at my house without vegetables. Never! I always made sure that my children ate plenty of fruits and vegetables, that they drank lots of water and stayed away from sugary foods like Coke and sweets.” She adds, “I was very strict when it

came to junk food and they knew it. I packed school lunches for them, because I didn’t want them going to the tuck shop or vendor to buy junk”.

She acknowledges that it is not easy to make kids eat vegetables, or to stay away from sweets and chips. But she believes that if a parent is strict and consistent, healthy eating will become ingrained in a child. “My kids had junk food like KFC only once in a while and not as a norm. The norm was a wholesome, home-cooked meal. But these days... you find with many families, that KFC is the norm and a home-cooked meal is the unusual thing,” she says sadly.

She insists that eating healthily is not as complicated or as expensive as some people say. “That can just be an excuse. I mean, you can get a head of cabbage, tomatoes, onions,

potatoes, and change from the money you would spend on KFC for the family”.

When asked how she managed to persuade her own kids to eat lots of vegetables, she says, “The thing about kids is that you have to make something sound exciting for them to buy into it. I used to tell my kids that eating carrots will make them have X-ray vision like Superman,” she laughs. “I always associated a healthy habit with one of their favourite super heroes, and it worked.”

“I cannot emphasize enough how important I think it is for parents to instil a culture of healthy eating in the home. Surely, a big part of your responsibility as a parent is to make sure that your children eat healthily, so that they grow up to be healthy

adults”, Nonofu says. She also mentions the importance of physical activity. “Children must also be encouraged to be active. Push your kids to go outside and play, instead of buying them Play Stations.”

When asked how she herself was raised, she says proudly, “During our time, everything we ate was fresh from our garden. Meat was also fresh. You knew what was in the food that you ate because you either produced it yourself or you got it from another local farmer. But nowadays...” She trails off and does not finish her sentence. One senses that she feels a certain sadness at how things have changed - for the worse.

“Right now, diabetes and hypertension are rife in my extended

family. This is because they have been careless about their lifestyle.” When asked how she feels about this, she says that it scares her. “It makes me watch what I eat even more, because I have seen how these diseases can affect a person. My own mother has both hypertension and diabetes, and really, it is a fate that I do not want for myself or any of my children.”

“I mean, some of these illnesses can be prevented with a little effort in watching what you eat and being active”, she says. “At my age, I am still fit and healthy. And to be honest, I look even better than some of the younger people I know. If they are not obese, they are sickly, because they don’t have a healthy lifestyle.”

When asked about tips she would give others, she mentions the following:

- Always try to prepare your own food. That way you can control what goes into it.
- Try eating fruit in-between meals, so that you don’t get too hungry and overeat when you finally sit down to your main meals.
- Cut down on red meat. Try and have a meal without meat at least once a week, for example, just eat your pap with spinach, beans or cabbage or even mopane worms.
- Try and eat your traditional starches, like sorghum and millet. These are not processed, so they are high in fibre.
- Prepare different dishes, so that your children don’t get tired of eating the same thing.
- Get your kids to help you grow veggies and prepare healthy food for the family. This will make them feel proud and excited about eating healthy food.



She concludes by saying, “coming from a very humble background, I can attest to the fact that money has nothing much to do with healthy eating. It’s all about effort and paying attention to the diet choices that you make. Parents need to realise that role modelling is a very powerful thing. Children learn how to eat from their parents”. ❤️



‘Cooking from the Heart’ Recipe Book

This is a recipe book of over 70 delicious, healthy recipes, which are suitable for the whole family. Ordinary South Africans were invited to submit their favourite family recipes for inclusion in the recipe book, through a nation-wide competition carried in the You, Drum and Huisgenoot magazines. The recipes received were then adapted by dietitians to make them healthier. The result is a collection of recipes which are healthier, budget-friendly and reflect the tastes of South Africans from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The book was a joint project of the Heart and Stroke Foundation SA (HSF), Pharma Dynamics, the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the Chronic Disease Initiative in Africa (CDIA).

TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN GET YOUR ‘COOKING FROM THE HEART’ RECIPE BOOK SEE THE BACK PAGE OF THIS LEAFLET ➔



Take-away Foods

Most of the processed and take-away foods we eat are loaded with kilojoules, fats, salt, artificial flavourants, colourants and sugar. No matter how good they might taste, you should only eat these foods very occasionally if you want to stay healthy. Eating too much of these

foods is one of the main reasons why South Africans are becoming more and more overweight and unhealthy. One way to avoid buying fast or street food too often is to rather pack your own lunch box for work or school. This can also help to save you money.

The Top 10 most unhealthy Take-Aways South Africans love to eat

1 Chips and crisps.

These foods are high in salt and fat. Brightly coloured chips are also full of artificial colourants and flavourants, which have been linked to allergies and hyperactivity disorders.

2 Fried chicken and fried fish.

Fried chicken and fried fish, whether from take-away restaurants or from the vendor at the side of the road, are foods that are usually very high in saturated fat and salty flavourants. Ask for your fish or chicken to be grilled instead, and if possible for the skin to be removed from the chicken before it is cooked. If this is not possible, take the skin off yourself before you eat it.

* Did you know?

Oils with trans fats are used by most fast food restaurants and food factories because they can be used many times over to deep fry food. They have been linked to heart disease and cancer and are even more harmful than saturated or animal fats.



3 Vetkoek.

This food is unhealthy because it is deep fried, usually in oil that has been used many times. It is full of kilojoules, but has no nutritional benefit and almost no fibre. It is appropriately named because it just makes you fat!

4 Gatsbys and Kotas.

'Gatsbys' and 'Kotas' are also high fat, high salt, high energy and low fibre foods, which have very poor nutritional value. The atchar many people like in their Kotas is also made with lots of oil and salt.

Did you know?
Surveys have shown that in South Africa, 70% of women and 45% of men over the age of 35 are overweight or obese. Nearly 20% of South African children are overweight.



5 Hot Dogs, Russians and Polony.

These meats are made from highly processed, poor quality meat, which is usually high in saturated fat, salt and additives to make them taste better. They also contain chemicals called nitrates, which have been linked to colon cancer.

** Did you know?*

Nitrates are preservatives used to increase the shelf life of factory processed meats.

6 Hamburgers.

Commercially produced hamburgers are usually high in saturated and trans fats, salt and added flavourants. Home-made hamburgers with brown rolls, good quality, lean meat and fresh vegetables are tastier, less fattening and much healthier.

7 Pies and pizza.

Like hamburgers, pies and pizzas are usually loaded with saturated fats and salt from cheese and salty meats. A healthier option would be to use mozzarella cheese on your pizza, and to choose vegetables and lower fat meat toppings, such as chicken strips, instead of salami and bacon.

8 Bunny chows.

Bunny chows are unhealthy if white bread loaves are used and they are filled with deep fried chips and fatty meat. A healthier option would be a brown loaf filled with lean meat like chicken, or a bean or vegetable curry.

9 Sweetened fruit juices and cold drinks.

Drinking too many sweetened drinks can make you gain weight. Overweight/obesity increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and cancer. Try and avoid drinking these kinds of drinks or drink them only occasionally. Rather drink water to quench your thirst.

** Did you know?*

An average 330 ml can of cold drink contains the equivalent of 7 teaspoons of sugar

10 Cakes and sweets.

Baked goods, like doughnuts, cakes, biscuits and sweets are usually very high in sugar and saturated fats like palm oil, coconut oil or butter. Many of these foods, when made in factories, also contain trans fats or partially hydrogenated fats, which are particularly bad fats. These foods are also high in kilojoules and can make you gain weight. They should only be eaten very occasionally. ❤️



How to eat out more healthily

In addition to most take-away meals being loaded with fat, salt or sugar, the portions are often far too big. However, eating out and buying take-aways can still be part of a healthier lifestyle if you choose your meals carefully.

A few tips to remember:

Choose take-away food outlets that provide healthier options, such as grilled or baked foods, and not just deep-fried, crumbed or battered foods.

Choose salads and veggies on the side instead of chips.

If the portion is too big, eat half of your meal and keep some for lunch the next day.

Try to avoid sauces made with cream or mayonnaise, or at least order the sauce on the side, so you can control the amount of sauce you use. Tomato based sauces are usually the better, lower fat options.

Easy guide for reading food labels

You'll soon learn which foods are the healthier choices if you start reading food labels. There are a few things you need to look out for on labels when shopping:



The first few ingredients listed on the ingredients list make up the largest part of the food. Therefore, rather avoid or eat less of a food if the following words are listed in the first few ingredients.

Fat, oil, lard, butter, cream, shortening, trans fat (or partially hydrogenated fats).

Salt or any word with 'sodium'.

Sugar, which can also be labelled as sucrose, glucose, maltose, dextrose, cane sugar, corn syrup, fructose.

Nutritional Information table

This shows you how much of each nutrient is in the food.

Look at the numbers per 100g of the product to compare similar foods with each other.

Use the table below to decide if the food is high or low in fat, saturated fat, sugar and sodium (salt).

Foods in the 'low' group can be eaten more often, but foods in the 'high' group should be eaten seldom or only on special occasions.

Nutrient (values are per 100g of food)	Low Go ahead Eat more often	Moderate Watch out! Eat sometimes	High Too much! Avoid
Fat	Less than 3 g	3 g - 20 g	More than 20 g
Saturated Fat	Less than 1.5 g	1.5 g - 5 g	More than 5 g
Sugar	Less than 5 g	5 g - 15 g	More than 15 g
Sodium (Salt)	Less than 120 mg	120 mg - 600 mg	More than 600 mg

Choose food with these logos

Health organisations have logos, which they award to foods that are healthier choices. If you include these foods as part of a healthy diet, they can help prevent heart disease, cancer or diabetes.



Elize takes action

BY VICTORIA CLARKE



Elize de Kock, an administrator at the Medical Research Council in Cape Town, had noticed her weight creeping up as she got older, but it was only recently when she finally realised that she had to take action.

‘I had a knee op, and the doctor told me that each extra kilogram was a burden on my knees. I realised that I had to look after them. Also, I had to start using blood pressure pills, which I always thought were only for old people...’ Elize trails off. ‘That was another wake-up call for me.’

However, Elize had an even bigger goal to reach. “The biggest reason was that my daughter got engaged, so I said to myself, you have a year until the wedding to do this thing. I had wanted to lose weight all along, but I would always put it off and say ‘tomorrow, tomorrow’. Now I had a really good reason. Then I remembered that before I got married 26 years ago, my mom lost weight and it was wonderful. I look at my pictures now, and I realise that it was something my mom did for herself, but it was also something she did for me. I owe it to my daughter too, because if I’m going to be a granny one day, I don’t want to be an overweight granny. I want to be able to play with my grandchildren.”

Elize describes how she changed her eating habits. “I started off by not eating refined carbs, and I could see the change immediately. I used to skip breakfast for many years. Some days I wouldn’t eat anything during the day, so when I got home, I would eat my breakfast, lunch and dinner in one huge meal. Now, by eating little bits throughout the day and only one plate of food in the evening, I have cut down.” Elize says that she’s actually less hungry now than she was before she changed her diet. “I never starve myself. I eat very regularly.”

When it comes to eating healthily, Elize gives the following tips. “Definitely have breakfast. My breakfast is anything from yogurt, to oats or an egg. At lunchtime, I usually bring some leftovers from the previous evening, often a little piece of chicken together with a salad. I eat fruit as a snack in between meals.”

In the evening, Elize’s husband usually cooks. “For supper we usually have a little fish, chicken, mince or pork with veggies. We bought a George Foreman grill, which means you can use less oil. You can do pretty much everything on it. I also love beans and lentils, which helps you to get your proteins if you’re not eating so much meat or cheese. Some of my vegetarian colleagues showed me how they cook lentils and I discovered how delicious they can be. We have also changed from white rice to brown rice.”

Elize hasn’t only changed her diet, she has also started being more active. She says, “Exercise is one of those things that I never thought I would enjoy. Before, whenever a magazine talked about fitness, I would just skip it, because I didn’t want to know anything about that. But now my eyes are open to what I can do. I enjoy walking and I have joined a fitness class at work.” Elize’s good exercise habits have influenced her family too. “My husband cycles a lot but he and our daughters also joined the gym recently”.

Elize’s change in lifestyle has had a remarkable effect on her health: “The other day I went to donate blood, and the nurse told me that my blood pressure was good. I was so pleased because I had not

I used to skip breakfast for many years. Some days I wouldn’t eat anything during the day, so when I got home, I would eat my breakfast, lunch and dinner in one huge meal.

heard that for a long time. After discussing it with my doctor, he lowered my blood pressure medication to half the dose.”

Elize says that her new habits have now become a way of life: “I can’t imagine going back to my old ways. Although the wedding is next weekend, I’m going to continue.”

Elize has found unexpected joy in her new body confidence. “When I lost weight, I decided to go swimming in the sea, something I had not done for many, many years. It made me feel like a teenager again! Recently I swam at Strand beach and it made me feel so happy! What is sad is that I missed out on doing that with my kids when they were small, because I was too shy. They would have loved it if I had joined them then.”

One of the best things about losing a few kilograms is the compliments you get: “The wonderful thing is that if you see people you haven’t seen for quite a while, they give you great compliments. And it’s only a few kilograms! It’s just another reason why my upcoming 50’s are definitely going to be the best time of my life.” ❤️



How to overcome difficulties to healthy eating

Here are some ideas on how one can overcome the difficulties many people mention when it comes to eating more healthily:

Cost - "healthy foods are too expensive"

- Buy seasonal vegetables and fruit because this is when it is the most economical
- Buy in bulk and share with your friends and family
- Plant your own vegetable garden
- Buy more vegetables instead of fruit
- Look out for specials
- Eat more beans and lentils as these are inexpensive, nutritious foods
- Skim milk powder is more economical than unhealthy coffee/tea creamers
- Tinned fish in excellent option and may cost less than fresh fish
- Whole chicken is cheaper per kilogram than buying chicken already cut into portions – you can save by cutting the chicken yourself (remember to remove the skin and fat)

"Someone else does the shopping and cooking"

- Make the whole household aware of the importance of healthy food and use our information to help you
- Offer to cook or shop if you can

"I don't like healthy food" or "My family doesn't like healthy food"

- Explain to your family how eating healthily is important to prevent disease
- Encourage your family to be adventurous. Try different tastes and cooking methods by trying some new recipes from the Pharma Dynamics and Heart and Stroke Foundation's 'Cooking from the heart' recipe book
- Make gradual changes and take small steps, e.g. cook a healthy meal once a week at first

"The shops in my area do not stock healthy food"

- Speak to shop/spaza managers and ask them to stock healthier options (e.g. lean meat, low fat and lower salt products)
- Grow your own vegetables

"I don't have a fridge or stove in my house"

- Choose foods which don't need to be refrigerated, e.g. skim milk powder, tinned fish
- Consider buying a microwave, which is cheaper than a stove

"Take-aways are easier" and "I like take-aways too much"

- Choose healthier take-away options
- Reduce the number of times you eat take-aways
- Experiment with the quick, easy and tasty meals from the Pharma Dynamics and HSF 'Cooking from the heart' recipe book
- Make take-away foods at home, the healthier way!
 - healthy burger on whole-wheat roll with oven-baked chips
 - battered skinless chicken baked in the oven
 - home-made pizzas with lots of vegetables and less cheese

"I don't think healthy eating is important enough in my life"

- Think about what it would mean for you and your family if you became disabled from something like a stroke, heart attack or cancer at a young age
- Having a chronic disease of lifestyle may cause you to lose income and medical treatment can be very expensive and time-consuming
- By eating well, you can live longer and live a healthier, happy life

"My husband likes me to be fat"

- Explain to your husband how eating healthily is important to prevent disease
- Overweight is a serious risk to your health, and is a major cause of many diseases, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and strokes



'Cooking from the heart' recipe book is available for free from the HSF.

If you would like a copy of the book, please contact the HSF at: **021 4476268** or heart@heartfoundation.co.za

Or you can download an electronic copy from www.cookingfromtheheart.co.za You can also download recipes on your mobile phone by going to www.heartrecipes.mobi

FOR MORE INFORMATION & ADVICE ON HEALTHY LIFESTYLES, YOU CAN CONTACT

Heart and Stroke Foundation Health Line

0860 14 32 78

(0860 1 HEART)

(share call)

www.heartfoundation.co.za

Cancer Association of South Africa

0800 22 66 22

(free call)

www.cansa.org.za



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