

Summary of the January, 2010 Program

After the Holidays, Be Good To Yourself

Presented by Joy Semelka, MS, RD, LDN, CDE (Dia-Triton, Inc.)

The North Central Florida Post Polio Support Group started the year 2010 with a program presented by registered dietitian, Joy Semelka. She is a licensed dietitian, a Certified Diabetes Educator with the American Association of Diabetes Educators, nutrition education specialist with the Society for Nutrition Education, a Medicare participating provider for Medical Nutrition Therapy and Diabetes Education and is co-owner of Dia-Triton, Inc. in Ocala. Joy is very knowledgeable in PPS and has worked with our group for 19 years.

Joy asked us, “When you see that title, what do you think of? Be good to yourself?” Some of the things people said were: sitting on the couch eating chocolates or having a glass of wine, or going to the spa or having breakfast in bed. These are the things we may think of as being good to ourselves.

Joy suggested we redirect our thinking about what being good to ourselves should mean. Most people spend more time taking care of their cars than they do taking care of their bodies. They think about what goes into their cars, what kind of gas or oil to use or what kind of wax to use on it? So we were asked to think about taking care of ourselves.

While researching this program, Joy went on line and found a line of foods listed under Sainbury’s “Be Good To Yourself” from the United Kingdom that offer foods that are high in nutrition, lower in calories and better for you to eat. They tell you how to still enjoy food without being overindulgent. And that’s what this program is about.

Joy asked if any of us had made New Year’s Resolutions for 2010. She said that resolutions should be about something that we should be continually doing, not something that we forget about as the year progresses. Sometimes we make nutrition resolutions after a trip to the doctor’s office. We learn that we have high blood pressure or high cholesterol or we have gained a few pounds. Then we go home and ask ourselves “where do I start?” and we try to do too much. We clean out our cabinets and go to the store and buy low calorie and fat free products and we come home and look in our refrigerator and decide there is nothing to eat. At least nothing that we want to eat.

Most people know what to do, they are just overwhelmed. We also have a lot of misinformation. People often think that if something is healthy they don’t have to worry about the calories. Those foods are most typically olive oil, dark chocolate, and most nuts and nut butters. People don’t count the calories that are in these “healthy” items.

Sometimes it can be confusing counting calories and trying to eat all of the things we are supposed to eat on a diet, so Joy suggests you start out by setting some goals.

Years ago Joy taught a class for diabetics before all of the information for diabetic nutrition was as available as it is today. Joy gave out the handout on nutrition and suggested that they follow it as a monthly guide. After about 18 months one of the people from that class came to see Joy and told her “you probably don’t recognize me.” Joy told her she was sorry, but she teaches a lot of people. The woman said that she came

to the class with her husband and went home and put the nutrition guide on their refrigerator and followed the monthly suggestions and she then lost 80 pounds. The list is as follows:

First	SUGAR	Reduce serving size and frequency by one half (sugars, jelly, desserts, soft drinks, Jello, candy and cookies.)
Second	ALCOHOL	Limit to one or less drinks per day
Third	FAT	Limit meat portion size to 2 to 3 ozs. Eat red meat less frequently, not more than three times per week. Use lean cuts, increase consumption of chicken, fish and legumes (dried peas and beans.)
Fourth	SALT	Do not use salt at the table. Substitute herbs and spices to season foods.
Fifth	FIBER	Switch to whole grain products such as whole wheat bread and pasta or brown rice.
Sixth	FAT	Reduce added fat in diet and recipes by one third to one half (margarine, oil mayonnaise, salad dressing.) Reduce frequency of fried foods by one half.
Seventh	CAFFEINE	Switch to decaffeinated coffee, tea and soft drinks. Avoid excessive chocolate intake.
Eighth	FIBER	Eat fresh fruits, vegetables, and legumes.
Ninth	SALT	Decrease consumption of salty foods (cured meats, canned fish, salty snack crackers and peanuts, canned soups and bouillon, ketchup, mustard, soy sauce and seasoned salt.)
Tenth	SWEETS	Limit sweets to 10% of calories. Example: 10% of 2000 calories = 200 calories, 200 calories = 16 oz. Pepsi or Coke, 1 small piece of cake, 3/4 cup of ice cream, 2 cookies.
Eleventh	FAT	Switch to low fat milk products (skim milk, low fat cheeses, and plain yogurt.) Limit egg yolks to 4 per week.
Twelfth	SALT	Reduce salt in cooking by one half.

- SUMMARY:**
1. Eat a variety of foods.
 2. Watch portion size.
 3. Use whole grains, fruits and vegetables daily
 4. Read food labels
 5. Eat well and be well!

Keeping a food diary is important so that you know how much food you actually consume.

Remember, no matter what age you are, if you start improving your nutrition, it can make an impact. And as we get older it becomes even more important. As we get older, we can't eat as much and our activities slow down, especially for those of us with Post Polio Syndrome. So we want to get quality into our diets instead of quantity.

Not everyone has the same problem with their diet. Some people have a problem with sugar intake while others may have a problem with salt or fat. In looking at the list of

suggestions on making changes, try concentrating on what causes you the most difficulty.

While looking at people's food lists, Joy often notices that many people use a lot of sugar and sugar substitutes. Natural sugar isn't as sweet as artificial sugar. Joy suggests that someone who enjoys sugar should try to cut back by using half as much as usual. If someone is used to having something sweet with each meal, it is hard to quit all of those but you can start by cutting half of them out and being aware of what you are eating. Sugar substitutes are intensely sweet and when you are used to eating sugar free Jello and pudding and beverages that are sweetened with them, then foods with natural sugar such as oranges or strawberries don't taste sweet. You have to wean yourself off of so much artificial sweetness so that natural foods will start tasting sweet to you again.

Alcohol can be another problem as we get older, especially if someone has diabetes, so cutting back to one drink or less a day can be very beneficial in improving health.

Too much fat intake is not good. If you are eating lots of fatty meats, try cutting back to less fatty cuts, instead eat more chicken, fish or legumes.

If you have heart problems sometimes doctors come out with statements like "cut out eating meat" or "don't eat anything white." Does that mean you can't eat cauliflower? What they really mean is don't eat fatty meat or too many starchy items. Try eating low fat meats, and chick peas or beans for a change from fatty meats and low starch vegetables like broccoli and squash.

Salt is something that needs to be used in moderation. Stop salting at the table. About five years ago the National Academy of Sciences came out and said nobody should be consuming more than 1500 milligrams of sodium a day (whether healthy or not.) Now you can find many grocery items that have reduced sodium as a result of this directive.

Putting more fiber in your diet is beneficial to improving your health. Check labels on food products you buy to find items that offer additional fiber, such as bread that is 100% whole wheat.

Look at ways to decrease fat in your diet. Cook with less oil. Use less margarine and salad dressing. You don't need to drown your salad in dressing. Many people think that because a dressing is low fat you can use twice as much. Unfortunately, low fat dressings often have more sugar in them. Stick margarine with trans fat is actually worse for you than real butter. Soft tub margarine still contains fat and should be used sparingly. Canola oil, olive oil and low fat margarine sprays are the least harmful for you as far as raising your cholesterol but should still be used in moderation.

Switch to dairy products that are lower in fat. Milk that is 2% isn't really low fat. You should try to use fat free milk. Remember to eat lower fat cheese and other dairy products as well as fat free milk.

Joy discussed trying to train our taste buds to get used to natural flavored foods without adding sweeteners or salt or other condiments that really aren't good for us. Researchers have found that it takes about twelve weeks to train your taste buds to accept the natural flavor of food.

The program concluded with Joy answering questions and handing out copies of the wellness calendar and information on easy ways to cut 100 calories, such as eating a

medium orange instead of drinking a glass of orange juice and eating vegetables with salsa instead of tortilla chips. We thank her for an interesting, fun, and informative program and look forward to hearing from her again.

Submitted by Sharon Daszczyński, copywriter, Polio Post News, January, 2010.