

Key to dietary success

TRADITIONALLY it is the months that follow the Easter holiday period that see many of us go off track when it comes to our diet and lifestyle resolutions.

Too much chocolate, too little activity and a couple of kilos of extra weight is often all that is needed to completely ditch ideal exercise regimes and dietary resolves of the year thus far. Unfortunately, the winter hibernation that many of us readily embrace then sees an extra 5 to 10kg on board by the time the flowers are opening come spring.

At this time of year, the best thing you can do is make an official declaration that this will not happen to you in 2010. It is time to immediately rid your home of all extra, leftover Easter treats because basically, if they are in the house, you will eat them.

Commit to getting to the shops each week to stock up on the foods you need to eat well and, when you have a spare hour on the weekend, cook up a low-energy vegetable soup (see recipe, right) or stir-fry to reheat on nights you know you will get home late. Always carry a protein-rich snack such as cheese and crackers, a nut or protein bar with you to avoid



Susie Burrell

overeating high-energy foods when you are caught out and hungry, and make it an absolute priority to get at least three cups of vegetable or salad into your diet every single day.

Surprisingly enough, planning, not knowledge, tends to be the key to dietary success. In a world in which food is readily available, and is only likely to become more so, it is up to us as individuals to learn to manage ourselves in such an environment.

The harsh reality is that if we don't, our weight will continue to increase and we will be less and less comfortable on a daily basis as a result.

Susie Burrell is one of Australia's leading dietitians and works at The Stadium Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Centre in Sydney – www.susieburrell.com.au.



Easter treats are fun, but no good for your diet. Picture: SIMON CHILLINGWORTH

Vegetable soup

- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 leek, thinly sliced
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 cups salt reduced vegetable stock plus 3 cups water
- 420g can chopped tomatoes
- 1 carrot, peeled and cut into 1cm cubes
- 500g pumpkin, cut into 1cm cubes
- celery chopped
- 1 broccoli head steamed

1 Heat the olive oil with onion in a large saucepan. Add the leek and gently cook over a low heat until soft, then add the stock, tomatoes, carrot and pumpkin.

2 Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer on low heat for 1 to 2 hours.

3 Top with steamed broccoli.

How to control your weight

- Always eat breakfast, the earlier the better
- Always carry a protein-based snack with you
- Aim to eat vegetables or salad with at least two of your meals
- Eliminate sugars from juices, biscuits, cakes and lollies completely
- Aim to eat just once every two to three hours
- And, most importantly, accept that exercise is something you are going to have to do regularly, for the rest of your life

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