

QUICK TAKES

It's That Resolution Time of Year



Perhaps you have already resolved to lose weight, eat healthy, exercise more or some other equally daunting task. If you haven't yet committed to a positive lifestyle change for 2012, consider this one simple strategy: eat more soup.

Really?

Yes! Research shows that eating broth-based soup, especially one swimming with vegetables, can help you lose weight and maintain a healthy weight. It's a great way to get more healthy vegetables into your diet, as well.



Soup's On

Several studies show that soup eaters end up weighing less than those who don't eat much soup, according to Penn State nutrition professor Barbara Rolls, co-author of "Volumetrics: Feel Full on Fewer Calories."

"Incorporating soups into a weight-management plan can really help save calories," she notes. She also likes it as a snack: "When you get the munchies, it's much better to have some soup than to go to the candy machine."

Soup Studies

The soup effect has been demonstrated again and again over the past 30 years:

- In a 1980s University of Pennsylvania study, 500 people in a weight-loss program noted each meal they ate for 10 weeks. Some were told to eat soup at least four times a week. The soup eaters ate fewer calories -- on average, 100 less per day -- and lost the most weight.
- In a Baylor University College of Medicine study, Dr. John Foreyt asked a group of overweight men and women on a low-calorie diet to eat soup every day. They liked it -- and were better able to maintain their weight loss than non-soup-eaters.
- At Penn State, Dr. Rolls' group gave women a 270-calorie first course before lunch. Some got chicken-rice casserole, others got the casserole plus 10 ounces of water. A third group received chicken-rice soup made from the casserole ingredients plus the water. Soup eaters took in about 100 calories fewer at the meal -- and they didn't eat more at dinner.
- In her latest studies, Rolls and colleagues found that the hunger-suppressing benefits of soup last a full two hours.
- In Paris, researchers at the Laboratory of the Neurobiology of Nutrition confirmed that water with a meal doesn't affect how full people feel -- but having the same ingredients as soup does.

Soup + Walking = 20 Fewer Pounds

"Small changes make a big difference," says John Foreyt, Ph.D., director of the nutrition research clinic at Baylor University's College of Medicine in Houston. "For many people, small changes over time are more sensible and more effective than big changes. I like the 100/100 rule," he says. "Eat 100 calories less tomorrow, and expend an extra 100 calories in physical activity, such as 20 minutes of walking." In the course of a year, he notes, such a change may make a difference of 20 pounds.



Beyond Soup: Eating Strategies

Is Soup Unique? Not At All

Eat any filling, low-calorie food as an appetizer or first course, and you'll likely make it easier to consume fewer calories at that meal. It's a kind of preemptive eating strategy. Make substitutions you like, ones that can become part of your life.

- Eat an apple or an orange before you go to lunch.
- Order melon as a first course.
- Start with a simple salad of baby spinach leaves and grapefruit segments.
- When you go to the salad bar, fill up your plate with "big" foods like dark leafy greens and vegetables, before going back for more calorically dense choices.

Find Creative Ways to Add More Veggies

- When making pasta sauce, limit the meat and add another onion and a chopped bell pepper or two. Or stir a couple handfuls of baby spinach in at the end of cooking.
- Add diced cooked sweet potato or green peas to pilafs or noodle dishes.
- When cooking a favorite stir-fry, double the vegetable quantity and cut the meat by half.
- Add corn kernels to chili or burrito fillings.



Lentil Soup with Greens Serves 4

You really will feel full on fewer calories with this satisfying soup. The flavorful broth is loaded with nutrient-loaded, low-calorie veggies and super-healthy lentils. Fat-free and calcium-rich Greek yogurt adds a final flourish. The made-from-scratch soup is ready in less than half an hour.

Ingredients

4 cups (1 liter) low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
1 1/4 cups (250 g) lentils, preferably French green lentils, picked over
1 large carrot, peeled and diced
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon olive oil
1 large sweet onion, such as Vidalia
10 oz (300 g) frozen spinach leaves or collar or mustard greens, thawed and sliced
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
3/4 cups (6 oz/175 ml) 0%-fat Greek yogurt
Lemon wedges
Aleppo pepper or ground red chile, optional

Preparation

1. In a large saucepan, bring broth and 2 cups (500 ml) water to a boil. Add lentils, carrots and herbs. Simmer over medium heat until the lentils and carrots are soft, about 20 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, while the lentils are cooking, heat oil in a heavy skillet over medium heat. Add onions and cook until translucent and soft, about 5 minutes. Add spinach or greens and a generous grinding of black pepper. Cook until hot. Stir this mixture into the lentil broth.

3. Ladle the soup into bowls and garnish each with a dollop of Greek yogurt and a squeeze of lemon juice. Dust with Aleppo pepper if desired.

Serve with warm whole-wheat pita breads; tzatziki (grated cucumbers, plain yogurt and mint); and Ambersweet oranges or Mineola tangerines for dessert.



Nutritional info

Per serving
363 Calories
3g Fat
0.5g Saturated fat
0g Trans fat
22g Protein
53g Carbohydrate
19g Fiber
459mg Sodium

Source:
Healthy Living Kitchens