



EAT FIT - Spring Clean Your Diet

By: Matt Zerr, BlueShield of Northeastern New York

Along with a new season comes the traditional spring-cleaning with our homes that all of us are accustomed to each year. This year though, I challenge you to extend that cleanse to your daily diet. I'm not referring to a "cleanse diet" but rather a simple plan to tidy things up a bit with what you eat each day.

Here are a few tips that can help you clean up your eating habits this spring:

Clean your fridge and pantry

Remember when you stocked up on yogurts when they were on sale in December? Those are well past their expiration date and need to be tossed ASAP! While you're at it, give your whole fridge and pantry a new look and remove any expired or questionable food items. Making this room gives you space to add more healthy items.

Adjusting your portions

Coming off of the holiday season, some of us are still having those Thanksgiving-sized dinners a few times each week. Hit the reset button with your portion sizes for the spring. Remember that fruits and veggies should be half of your plate each meal. Visit choosemyplate.gov for a refresher.



Minimize additives in what you eat

Now that you've cleaned out space for new food, let's make sure it's healthy! Start reading those food labels and look to the keep things simple. Fewer ingredients on a food label often means the food is closer to its original source and less likely to contain additives that we don't need. You can also minimize extra calories by opting for foods lower in sugar, salt and fat. Lastly, be sure to give your produce a good wash before consuming to help remove preservatives and pesticide residue.

Switch up your produce

Everyone has their favorite go-to fruit or vegetable but a seasonal change brings a new lineup of options for produce. Be adventurous and try something new! You should always look to incorporate the colors of the rainbow with your choices. If you're not sure when produce is at its best or in-season, visit fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org to give you some ideas or swing by your local farmers' market to grab the latest in-season produce.

I hope everyone will take advantage of this seasonal opportunity to spring clean your diet!

GET FIT - Outdoor Adventures

By: Amy Bracewell, Saratoga National Historical Parks

One of my favorite things about exercising in nature is that it gives me a chance to clear my head. When I go hiking, or take a walk in nature, my mind is focused on the task at hand. It is just me and the trees, and rocks, and birds. Nature doesn't care what kind of car I drive, or what I'm wearing, or deadlines at work. I am able to get away from the pressures of everyday life and focus on the environment around me.

There are many benefits from exercising outside. From the mental wellness, to the physical benefits, to the social benefits. Outdoor activities can strengthen and build individual's and a communities social network's and bonds. It is also an excellent opportunity to get involved in your community – explore and learn about your parks, take care of them, and volunteer.

The choices for scenery are limitless. If you get easily bored at the gym, or are tired of your exercise videos, our county's amazing trails, parks, and wilderness areas give all of us opportunities to explore new terrain and new environments. There are so many different experiences in our immediate area. From local parks, state parks, national parks, and the Adirondacks or Green Mountains. Finding an outdoor activity is as easy as walking to your local park. What adventures can you experience with your wellness goals?



LIVE FIT - Walk/Run to Better Health

By: Anthony Mastroianni, iRun LOCAL

Walk/Run to Better Health

When I run through the welcoming neighborhoods of Saratoga Springs, I often pass the sign on Washington Ave that reads: "Welcome to Saratoga Springs. Health. History. Horses." In the winter, with short days and sub-zero temps, it is easy to forget about Health and Horses, at least. But Spring has a way of jogging our memories and reminding us to unplug our treadmills and get moving outside for better health.

As the days lengthen and the sun shines more warmly, so do our opportunities to run and walk in areas all over Saratoga County. There literally is something for everyone who wants to walk or run to a better health. Running and walking groups, running clubs, triathlon clubs, training groups, trails, and local races.

The star of this show is a city that offers beautiful green parks, safe neighborhoods with wide streets and sidewalks, miles of trails, and a community of health-inspired people. Here are some of my favorite ways to get and stay healthy this spring while participating in our running and walking community.

Broadway's wide sidewalks are perfect for a lunch time walk or run with co-workers. The local running club, the Saratoga Stryders, meets every Wednesday in Spa State Park at 6PM for a coach-led workout. The local running store, iRun LOCAL, hosts free group runs and walks every Saturday morning at 9AM and monthly Happy Hour Fun Runs. There are trails throughout the city in Spa State Park and Skidmore College. My best advice is to lace up and be a part of this wonderful healthy community.

