

# The 30 Pound Club

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November 3, 2011 – Grand Rapids, MI

## Teach Them Young

Eating more fruits and vegetables is the key to good health and achieving a normal body weight. The older we get, the tougher it is for us to change our habits to increase the vegetables and fruits while reducing the fat intake and refined carbohydrates. It's best to start those habits young, in my opinion, and a recent study confirms that maybe we're not doing a very good job.

Researchers examined the diets of college students using a food survey to see what they ate and if there were differences in the diets between young men and women. And, oh boy, were there differences! In a sample that was primarily freshman, the young men had a much greater fat intake than the young women. The researchers also reported that men had a higher fiber intake and ate more fruits and vegetables than the women. On the surface that's surprising—we would expect women to eat better.

Well, you know the saying about details? The men ate a whopping five fruits and vegetables per week. You read it correctly—five per week. The recommended amount is five per day! And the women were even worse at four servings per week. The researchers acknowledged that college students should be the focus of nutritional education. That's an understatement if I've ever heard of one. They further stated the information should be tailored to each sex because men and women learn differently. I'm not sure how they're going to do it, but a baseball bat might be a good way to get their attention.

When we examine which age group has the best diet, it's children two and younger. Why? Because we feed them, and they eat what we shove in their little mouths. But once they're past the point where we feed them, the fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods are history.

This study confirms we're not doing a very good job of teaching them healthy eating. One way you can do that is to set an example as you finish up this year to get rid of those 30 pounds. You may have been thinking only about your eating habits and maybe even preparing two different meals. Enough of that—everyone eats the same healthy food. Think of it this way: you took years to develop the eating habits you've got.

Your children, even if they're in their teens, are not beyond hope, but you've got to set the tone now, and it's better to harp on how many veggies they're eating than to criticize their weight. Maybe you could set a requirement of five fruits and veggies every day, ask them in the morning what their plan is for that day, and follow up to make sure they're meeting that goal. Bribe them if you have to—money, a camping trip, more clothing, unlimited texting. Take some time to think about what method would work with your children and how you're going to hold them accountable. However you do it, teach them young so they don't have to face the issues you face with your health and your weight.

One and Done.

What are you prepared to do today?

***Dr. Chet***



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