



TREATS CAN BE PART OF HEALTHY EATING

We often think of healthy eating as an all or none situation. Many of us feel that in order to eat healthy we have to eat a salad every day and avoid all treats and when we don't accomplish that we feel like guilty. I'd like to suggest we re-think that.

I was recently at a friend's home celebrating her birthday. Someone at the party mentioned they were trying to eat healthy but they had failed that day because of the cake, chips and drinks and that got me thinking. Healthy eating is much more than eating only nutritious food. Enjoying treats on special occasions, eating a couple pieces of chocolate after a meal or going out for a burger and fries once in a while can all be part of healthy eating. Having treats are okay as long as we focus on eating fruits and vegetables, whole grains, dairy, plant based proteins like lentils, seeds and nuts most of the time. Having a good relationship with food and enjoying all food, even those no-so-nutritious food, can set us up for a lifetime of healthy eating. This mindset allows us to not feel guilty when eating treats and it can keep us on track with healthy eating!

We are bombarded by so many messages on social media about what foods to eat for certain health benefits. The truth is all food provides health benefits. The piece of cake that I ate at the birthday celebration was good for my sense of well-being and social connectedness. I enjoyed eating that small piece of cake with friends as we talked, laughed, and enjoyed each other's company. And of course that chocolate cheesecake tasted really good too – it was the real deal - made with real cheese and real chocolate. Many desserts and recipes out there use alternative ingredients to make them seem healthier, but the reality is that date loaded, cashew cream-filled, carob soaked cake is really not any healthier than the real deal.

Sometimes we all need a reminder of what healthy eating really is. Registered Dietitians are able to help by working with you to determine what works best for you. And, yes, that might include having a small treat every day! Registered Dietitians take a holistic approach, looking at all aspects of your life, to help you to make healthy lifestyle changes. To speak to a Registered Dietitian, you can call HealthLinks BC at 8-1-1.