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Spring Incoming- Tips to Give Your Diet a Spring Clean!

Spring is here! With days growing longer, the weather getting warmer and the blossom on our fruit and almond trees here, we can finally come out of the hibernation of winter. Spring signaling new beginnings. This is your chance to get outside more, get moving and start the season with plenty of seasonal fresh produce in our diet to bring back the spring in your step!

We know that fruits and vegetables are a vital component of a healthy diet and are widely recommended for their health and nutritional properties. (1) The many vitamins, minerals and dietary fibre they contain means we want to be eating plenty of them every day. (1,2).

The recommended intake of fruit and vegetables that men and women over the age of 18 years should be eating daily consists of 5-6 serves of vegetables and legumes and 2 serves of fruit (3).

During the colder months there is less choice in fresh foods and with Spring comes a whole new range of seasonally fresh produce to enjoy for us to try and hit these recommended targets every day.

Fresh fruit and Vegetables in Season in Spring

Knowing what will be ripe in Spring means you are purchasing produce that is tastier, generally cheaper (as it is more abundant) and nutritious for your diet! During Spring vegetables tend to outshine fruit, with more vegetables coming into season.

Try some new fruits and vegetables and prepare old favourites in different tasty ways. For example, if cooking fresh asparagus, add in some different herbs, a squeeze of lemon and sprinkle over some flaked almonds. If stewing rhubarb with apples why not add some slivered almonds. Here are some Spring fruits and vegetables to enjoy!

Spring Fruits

- Navel Oranges
- Imperial mandarins
- Grapefruit
- Lemon

Spring Vegetables

- Asparagus
- Spinach
- Silverbeet
- Peas
- Rhubarb
- Avocado
- Mushrooms

Fuelling for Spring

With warmer weather comes with the pleasure of spending more time outdoors. If you are increasing your exercise you may need to increase your fuel. This might mean slightly larger meals or nourishing snacks. Mixing some fresh Spring fruit with a healthy handful of almonds would work well. A handful of almonds paired with fruit combines the carbohydrate from the natural sugars in the fruit to refuel muscles with the protein in the almonds to help support [muscle growth and repair](#). (4) If you are wanting to gain some muscle over Spring then foods high in protein such as [almonds after exercise](#) can assist. (4, 5)

Remember that as the weather gets a little warmer you may also need to think about having more fluid, which for most of us is sufficient to be more water.

Goodbye to Winter Weight Gain

We often find ourselves eating more and moving less in winter which can result in weight gain. An extra biscuit or cake here and there with a cup of tea on a cold winter night, does that sound familiar? We can all enjoy a little of this but as Spring moves in take the opportunity for more fresh produce at snack time. A daily 'healthy handful' of almonds and slash the sugary biscuits. Nuts could be the healthy secret you are looking for. They are tasty and delicious. Although nuts are high in fat, it is a healthy

fat that our body needs. Research shows they are not associated with [weight gain](#), (6,7) in fact they may contribute to the opposite. Move over sweet biscuits and chips; nuts are moving in.

Mindfully Eating

Slow and smell the roses! All sorts of beautiful flowers will be blooming so use this as a reminder to eat slowly and savour the flavor. When we eat slowly we have more chance for the stomach to signal to the brain when we are full rather than being overfull before we notice.

Switch off the computer, television and your phone and enjoy the fresh food delights that Spring time brings!

References:

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