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## Nutrition Nibbles

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### Lose Pounds, Save Dollars

Spring is here and summer is just around the corner. The weather is heating up and many people are dressing down. As society comes out of its winter hibernation, thoughts go to shaping up eating and exercise habits while slimming down waist sizes. Many people are starting to dream of and budget for their summer vacations. Here are a few of my favorite tips to help spur weight loss and save a little dough at the same time.

- 1. Limit dining out to no more than once per week (this includes lunch!)** Not only does preparing your own meals and snacks save you money, it saves you calories and fat. It improves the nutritional quality of your diet (more vitamins, minerals, nutrient-dense choices) which in turn improves your overall health and saves you healthcare dollars! I don't know about you but I'd rather spend my cash on fresh, homemade food than medical copays.
- 2. Stick to drip coffee.** If you cannot stand the taste of coffee, get out of the cafe! If you have to mask the flavor of coffee in order to get your caffeine fix, you probably need to rethink your choices. Some of these coffeehouse "milkshakes" pack in 400-500 calories (or a meal's worth) in 16 ounces. Generally, the more expensive your drink, the more calories it has. Choose unsweetened drip coffee, brewed tea, or Americanos for only five calories and several bucks less.
- 3. Ditch the gym membership (if you don't use it).** So many people keep their gym memberships with good intentions--they plan to start working out...someday. If you aren't getting your money's worth, cancel your membership and spend that money on something you will use instead to improve your health and slim down. Some ideas include a good pair of walking shoes, a pedometer, a piece of exercise equipment for the house, a new bike, a race fee, or a meal planning subscription.
- 4. Grocery shop once per week.** Planning your week's meals and snacks ahead of time, creating a grocery list, and shopping only once per week guarantee you will save money. You won't fall prey to unnecessary, impulse (expensive!) buys and you're more likely to shop with portion control in mind (waist and waste control!) Once you get into this weekly shopping routine, I bet you'll find that the nutrient quality of your week improves and you feel that healthy eating is a lot easier.
- 5. Commit to doing one active thing daily, no matter how small.** Walking around the block daily or taking one flight of stairs three times daily costs nothing but burns calories which is helpful when you're trying to lose weight. In addition, these simple activities just might get you thinking about what other easy fitness habits you can incorporate into your daily routine. Before you know it, you're a full-blown active person reaping the benefits of improved health and energy, lowering your healthcare costs at the same time. *Enjoy your days of cost-cutting and pound-blasting!*

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