The health benefits of drinking water daily are innumerable.

The health benefits of drinking water are clearly shown when you consider that babies are supposed to be about 85% water. As people age the majority of them tend to dehydrate. The average adult's body is around 75% water but people in old age or who have a chronic illness can dip as low as 65% for men and 52% for women. At the brink of death this can drop another 10%. Dehydration and it's correlation with dead things are synonymous throughout nature. Think of plants and leaves that are dead. They dry up and become brittle and fragile. Most people literally shrink and dry up as they age past a certain point (wrinkles, loss of height and muscle mass) due to severe dehydration from not getting the benefits of drinking water daily.

The importance of drinking water as part of your diet for longevity cannot be overemphasized! In his book "Your Bodies Many Cries For Water", F. Batmanghelidj, M.D. clearly shows that every major illness that humans face is either caused by, or is significantly related to chronic dehydration. The words "You're not sick; you're thirsty. Don't treat thirst with medication." wisely graces the cover of his book. This sums up his stance on health and is the reason why the benefits of drinking water daily should be realized and put into practice before any other exercise or health routine.

Not only do most people fail to drink water throughout the day, they instead choose beverages which provide little to no hydration and which often even cause further dehydration. The human body is very resourceful and when faced with water shortages, it will begin to conserve as much water as possible by limiting urine output (by concentrating the urine) and pulling water out of the less vital areas of the body. This simply causes accelerated aging in all its forms. Number one of all the great anti-aging secrets is to take part in the health benefits of drinking water daily, in the appropriate quantity, for your entire life.

In Dr. Batmanghelidj's book, he covers how nearly every major disease that western culture suffers from is intimately connected with chronic dehydration. Here are a few examples:

Rheumatoid arthritis pains have been found to have a strong correlation with dehydration (along with other easily changeable lifestyle factors). The cartilage in joints contain a lot of water for lubrication and they are supplied with water through the bone structure. The human body gives priority to certain vital parts over others in situations of dehydration. The bone marrow is extremely important for life and so when water is in short supply the body will prefer to keep the marrow hydrated over the surrounding tissues (which leads to dehydrated joint cartilage). Because of the reduced lubrication caused by dehydration, the cartilage becomes more abrasive and inflammation will begin to occur which is the pain associated with rheumatoid arthritis and other forms of joint pain.

Stress and depression have dehydration as one of their primary causes (most diseases and problems have multiple causes, so addressing all of them is always best instead of relying on just one approach). The brain contains a lot of water. When dehydration is taking place, the brain begins to have trouble dealing with multiple inputs. The result is a person who becomes depressed from feeling overwhelmed and unable to handle life (This is very similar to chronic fatigue syndrome). The health benefits of drinking water daily is the most obvious when we consider that the symptoms of dehydration are identical to stress. Cortisone is released into the body when dehydrated or stressed to breakdown raw material (ie. muscle tissue, organ tissue and bone tissue) to help the body "get over the hump". If you're chronically dehydrated you're never going to get over this hump until you start drinking more water.
High blood cholesterol can be partly due to dehydration. Since cholesterol is not water permeable, one of its many functions is to act as a "sealant" in the cell membrane for cells (that have a nucleus) to protect them from dehydration. One of the body's defense mechanisms is to make more cholesterol when it is dehydrated to help keep these cells from drying out. When excess cholesterol is made it ends up forming plaque along the walls of arteries and capillaries.

A dry mouth is not the only sign of dehydration!

According to an article written in the August 2001 issue of "Alternatives" by Dr. David G. Williams, "Researchers with Britain's Olympic team found that levels of 1 percent dehydration yielded a corresponding 5 percent drop in performance". When you begin becoming dehydrated your body compensates by balancing what water you do have available in your cells throughout your entire body. This means that everything is affected when you avoid the benefits of drinking water daily. Long term chronic dehydration results in increased risk of problems with every single bodily function.

Signs that you're dehydrated are:

~Urine color (If it's anything but clear you're dehydrated. The darker it is the more dehydrated you are.)
~Constipation (The benefits of drinking water daily couldn't be clearer then with this health issue. Everyone is focused on getting more fiber in their diet right now, but adequate water is actually more preventative. One quart of water is used for every healthy bowel movement an adult takes.)
~Mental fatigue and headaches.
~Muscle pain and other "phantom pains" (If you haven't just worked out and it's not more likely to be another cause, many bodily pains are just cries for water.)
~Acid reflux
~Parched mouth and throat

The health benefits of drinking water are going to be hindered when you consume or do things that cause accelerated dehydration. If you engage in consuming alcohol, caffeine, pop, cooked foods, artificial sweeteners and/or smoking, then you will need to take in more water than normal. The best bet is for you to change bad habits by eradicating these horribly health damaging practices from your life.

"To get the essential health benefits of drinking water, how much should I be consuming?"

You commonly hear people saying things like "You have to get 7-8 glasses of water a day!". First of all, we have to recognize that we are all different shapes, sizes, have varying levels of physical activity and consume different foods and beverages. Also how much is a glass of water anyways?! No matter what your situation is according to the above variables, the absolute minimum amount of water that should be consumed each day is half your body weight (in pounds) in ounces (8 ounces = 1 cup, so for example a 160 lb person would require a minimum of 10 cups (80oz) of water a day). This amount is commonly recommended by many of the top health authorities including Dr. Brian Clement, Dr. F. Batmanghelidj, Dr. Mercola and more.

Q. "Can I include juices and other non-caffeine, non-alcoholic beverages in with the above mentioned daily amount?"
A. No, pure water is the best and most essential liquid needed to hydrate our cells most thoroughly. However, drinking other fluids will still hydrate you (less efficiently) and is the reason why you may not require more than the above recommended daily amount.
When do I need more water?
~If you drink alcohol (Alcohol suppresses the secretion of vasopressin which leads to dehydration.)
~If you drink or consume caffeine or other alkaloid containing stimulants
~If you exercise regularly
~If you live in some combination of an overly hot, cold or dry climate (or if at certain times of the year this takes place)
~While traveling on airplanes (or other very dry environments)
~If you consume artificial sweeteners
~If you're suffering from a chronic disease in which dehydration might be one of many possible major causes
~If you smoke regularly (Look at the skin of any long term smoker to see the proof of this effect.)

Sources:
~"Your Body's Many Cries For Water" by F. Batmanghelidj M.D. (Global Health Solutions, 1992)
~"How Long Do You Choose to Live" by Peter Ragnar (Roaring Lion Publishing, 2001)
~"The Hidden Messages in Water" by Masaru Emoto (Beyond Words Publishing, 2001)
~"Lifeforce" by Brian Clement Ph.D, N.M.D, L.N.C
Scientists have found that in order to be healthy, people must maintain body fluids in the slightly alkaline range, 7.1 to 7.5 pH. The pH scale goes from 0 (totally acid) to 7 (neutral) to 14 (totally alkaline). Over 150 degenerative diseases are linked to acidity, including cancer, diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, gall and kidney stones, and many more. All diseases thrive in an acidic, oxygen-poor environment.

A drop in every point on the pH scale is 10x more acidic than the previous number - i.e. from 7 to 6 is 10x, from 7 to 5 is 100x etc. From 7 to 2 is 100,000x more acidic. Conversely, a rise in one point on the scale represents 10x more alkaline.

Colas are in the approximate 2.5 pH range. Almost no soda is higher than 3.0. Diet sodas are the worst as they are the most acidic. Actually diet sodas can cause you to gain weight because they alter the blood chemistry, making changes in your metabolism leading to a slower metabolic rate and causing the formation of fat to store the acids to protect the body. The best liquid to drink is water. And, the purest is reverse osmosis water.

Almost everything we do including our lifestyles and diets push us into the acidic range. Animal proteins, simple carbohydrates, and fats are all digested down to acids. Even metabolic functions and exercise create acids (lactic acid). Body fluids range between 4.5 and 7.5 pH. Blood must maintain an alkaline range of 7.35 to 7.45 pH. If we do not get the proper minerals (minerals are the alkalinizing or "buffering" elements that are essential to health) in the proper forms, our bodies may begin to deteriorate. When you drink soda, the deterioration is likely to happen at a greatly accelerated rate.

Will Cola & Sodas Actually Kill You?

Over the long term, the effects of colas are devastating to the body. Acidity, sugars, and artificial flavors and sweeteners can shorten your life significantly.

It takes 32 glasses of alkaline water at an alkaline pH of 9 to neutralize the acid from one 12 oz. cola or soda. When you drink a cola or soda, the body will use up reserves of its own stored alkaline buffers, mainly calcium from the bones and iodine from your thyroid to raise the body's alkalinity levels, especially to maintain proper blood pH levels. Acidic blood levels cause death! There are enough acids in one soda to kill you outright if you didn't possess a mechanism to neutralize them by taking minerals from your bones and tissues. But your body's mineral supply can be used up.

Sodas, like water and some other liquids, pass very quickly through the stomach into the small intestine where they are assimilated through the openings in the villi in the walls of the intestines into the bloodstream without being digested. Liquids do not remain in the digestive tract. Liquids go into the bloodstream and are filtered through the liver and the kidneys, and whatever is not needed by the body is sent to the bladder to be urinated out. But along the way, these liquids come in contact with virtually every cell in your body. So, if the liquid is not pure and healthy, it will negatively affect the body.

When a substance is acidic, it contains a large number of positively charged hydrogen ions. These positively charged ions are lacking electrons and rip electrons away from other atoms and molecules in the body which themselves become electrically unstable and seek other electrons from other atoms and molecules. These unstable atoms and molecules are called free radicals, and they do their damage by initiating a chain reaction of electron ripping. Whenever an electron is torn from an atom a tiny spark is produced, and this spark is damaging to cell membranes just as a nuclear explosion is damaging to cities. This is called free radical damage and can be seen under a microscope in live blood cell analysis.

The body must stop this process because you will die if your body cannot neutralize the acids. When you use up the supply of available minerals to neutralize the acids, degenerative disease begins. Every soda you drink will contribute to this acidity. Even without soda our bodies naturally produce acids, and minerals are needed in our diets to stop the deterioration process. Unfortunately, most of the food people it no longer contains the minerals we need. This is one of the main reasons for the degenerative diseases so prevalent today.

Most degenerative diseases we call "Old-Age Diseases" like memory loss, osteoporosis, arthritis, diabetes, hypertension, and many more are actually life style conditions caused by long-term acidosis, caused by essential nutrient deficiencies, what we eat, don't eat, or don't properly absorb or eliminate.
How to Keep Your Colon Clean and Healthy

By: Dr. Ben Kim

If you want to experience your best health, an essential requirement is keeping your colorectal region clean and healthy. Keeping your colon and rectum clean and healthy provides a number of health benefits, the main ones being:

1. A lowered risk of developing colorectal cancer, the second or third leading type of cancer in most industrialized countries.
2. A lowered risk of experiencing irritable bowel syndrome, chronic constipation, and chronic diarrhea.
3. A lowered risk of developing hemorrhoids.
4. Less objectionable gas production.
5. More efficient absorption of water and minerals.
6. A feeling of lightness, comfort, and well-being in your abdominal region.

Your colon and rectum are collectively referred to as your large intestine, which is the last part of your digestive tract.

A Journey Through Your Large Intestine

After food passes through your stomach and small intestine, the remaining material, mostly waste products in liquid form, move on to the first part of your large intestine - your colon.

Your colon is approximately 6 feet long and serves primarily to dehydrate liquid waste material.

Your colon begins at the lower right hand corner of your abdomen, where it is called your cecum. Attached to your cecum is a twisted, worm-shaped tube called your appendix.

From your cecum, your colon travels up the right side of your abdomen, where it is called your ascending colon. When it reaches your lower right ribs (just below your liver), it turns to travel across your abdomen to just below your lower left ribs; here, it's called your transverse colon.

Just below your lower left ribs, it makes another turn and travels down the left side of your abdomen - this portion is called your descending colon.

Your colon then makes one last turn toward the middle of your abdomen, forming an "S" shaped segment that is called your sigmoid colon.

Your sigmoid colon empties waste materials into your rectum, which is like a storage pouch that holds onto your feces until contractions in your large intestine stimulate a bowel movement.

In order to understand how to keep your colorectal region clean and healthy, let's go over a few key details on how your large intestine works.

Large Intestine Physiology
Movement of Waste Material

After you eat a substantial meal, your stomach expands enough to trigger a reflex that causes a contractile wave (called a peristaltic wave) to travel through your small intestine and push any liquid waste material (chyme) that is sitting in the last part of your small intestine into your large intestine.

Once enough liquid waste material accumulates in your cecum (the first part of your large intestine), the waste material begins to move up your ascending colon.

Movement of waste material through your colon is facilitated by something called "hastral churning." Your colon is divided along its length into small pouches called hastra. When a hastrum is filled with substantial waste material, its muscular walls contract and push the waste material into the next hastrum. The contractile reflex that allows hastral churning is regulated by your enteric nervous system, which is a division of your autonomic nervous system.

On average, your colon experiences anywhere from about 3 to 12 moderate waves of contractions every minute. After every substantial meal, your colon experiences a much larger contractile wave, called "mass peristalsis." Mass peristalsis serves to push waste materials from your transverse colon all the way to your rectum. In most people, mass peristalsis occurs about three times a day.

Water and Nutrient Absorption

The mucosal lining of your large intestine is lined with tiny pits that open into long, tube-like intestinal glands; these glands are lined with specialized cells that absorb water, and other specialized cells (goblet cells) that release mucous into your large intestine to lubricate your stools and to protect the lining of your large intestine against acidic substances and noxious gases.

The specialized cells that absorb water from your waste materials are responsible for about 10 percent of the water that you absorb from the foods and beverages that you ingest; the remaining 90 percent is absorbed by cells that line your small intestine.

This 10 percent of water absorption in your large intestine amounts to anywhere between a pint and a quart of water in most people, and represents a significant portion of your body's daily intake of water. As water is absorbed from the waste material in your colon, so are some nutrients, mainly minerals like sodium and chloride.

It takes anywhere between 3 to 10 hours for your large intestine to absorb enough water from waste material to turn it into solid or partially solid stools. Your stools consist mainly of water, mucous, fiber, old cells from your intestinal lining, millions of microorganisms, and small amounts of inorganic salts.

When your rectal pouch is distended with enough feces to trigger a contractile reflex, your feces are pushed out through your anus. When you consciously contract your abdominal wall, your diaphragm moves downward and helps open up muscles that line your anal sphincter.

Your rectum is lined with three horizontal folds, called your rectal valves; these valves are what prevent stools from passing through your anal sphincter when you pass gas.

If you choose not to release stools when you experience an urge to do so, your reflex contractions may stop, in which case you likely won't have a significant bowel movement until the next mass peristalsis occurs.
Diarrhea and Constipation Explained

When waste material travels through your digestive tract too quickly for sufficient water absorption to occur, your stools will be runny and more frequent than normal.

Three main causes of diarrhea are:

- Undesirable microorganisms
- Food intolerances (like lactose intolerance)
- Stress

In the first two cases listed above, it makes sense that your body would want things to move quickly through your system; your body doesn't want to spend time digesting foods that it cannot properly extract nutrients from or that are laced with disease-causing microbes.

Stress can cause transit time to shorten by messing with your enteric nervous system; please recall that your enteric nervous system controls the reflex contractions that mark "hastral churning." Your enteric nervous system is a part of your autonomic nervous system, and your autonomic nervous system regulates your physiological responses to emotional and physical stress.

When waste material travels through your colon more slowly than it should, so much water is sucked out of your waste material that your stools become hard.

Five main causes of constipation are:

- Eating sporadically, or eating meals that are too small to elicit mass peristalsis.
- Not going when you feel an urge to go
- Lack of a healthy intestinal lining that is capable of producing enough mucous to properly lubricate your stools (vitamin A deficiency is a potential cause of this situation)
- Insufficient intake of water, water-rich foods, and/or fiber-rich foods.
- Stress

Natural Ways to Keep your Colorectal Region Clean and Healthy

Please note: A number of the following ways to keep your colon and rectum healthy are tied to preventing chronic constipation.

Chronic constipation is the single greatest cause of having an unclean and unhealthy colorectal region because over time, constipation causes your bowel walls to face excessive pressure - pressure that is created by you straining to go and by your colon walls creating stronger contractions to help eliminate hard stools.

Excessive pressure on your colon walls can cause little pouches called diverticuli to form. Sometimes, small bits of waste material can get lodged in diverticuli.

Eat substantial meals; don't nibble on small amounts throughout the day.
Each time you eat a substantial meal, you stimulate stretch receptors in your stomach that are responsible for triggering normal and mass peristaltic waves throughout your small and large intestines, ensuring regular movement of waste material through your colon and rectum.

Also, eating substantial meals allows significant "chunks" of waste materials to travel together through your colon, turn into well formed stools, and get eliminated from your body in an efficient manner.

**Don't suppress the desire to go.**

If you regularly suppress the urge to have a bowel movement, waste materials spend more time than is optimal in your colon, causing excessive dehydration of waste materials and formation of hard stools.

**Ensure adequate intake of water and/or water-rich foods.**

Water helps to move waste materials along, and is absorbed throughout the entire length of your colon. Insufficient water intake can cause stools to form far before waste materials reach your rectal pouch, which can cause constipation.

**Eat fiber-rich foods regularly.**

Fiber adds bulk to the boluses of waste material that travel through your large intestine, and this bulk is essential to your colon's ability to turn waste materials into well formed stools.

A diet that is rich in vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole grains ensures high fiber intake.

**Ensure adequate vitamin D status.**

Adequate vitamin D status significantly lowers your risk of developing all types of cancer, including colorectal cancer.

When you aren't able to get regular exposure to sunlight, enough to tan without getting burned, look to ensure adequate vitamin D status by eating healthy foods that contain vitamin D.

**Ensure adequate vitamin A status.**

As mentioned above, glands that line the mucosal lining of your colon are responsible for releasing mucous that is needed to lubricate your feces; vitamin A is needed to maintain the health of these specialized cells that release mucous.

It's best to ensure adequate vitamin A status by eating healthy foods that contain vitamin A.

**Ensure adequate intake of healthy fats.**

All of your cells, including those of your large intestine and nervous system, require a constant influx of undamaged fatty acids and cholesterol to remain fully functional. If you don't ensure adequate intake of healthy fats, your nervous system and the smooth muscles that surround your digestive passageway - both of which are responsible for creating peristaltic waves throughout your digestive tract - may deteriorate in function.

Also, intake of healthy fats is necessary for optimal absorption of fat-soluble vitamin A, which, as mentioned above, is critical to building and maintaining the mucosal lining of your colon.
Healthy foods that are rich in healthy fats include: avocados, organic eggs, olives, extra-virgin olive oil, raw nuts, raw seeds, and cold-water fish.

**Build and maintain a population of friendly bacteria in your digestive tract**

Large populations of friendly bacteria can keep your digestive tract clean and healthy by:

- Promoting optimal digestion, thereby preventing build-up of toxic waste materials
- Taking up space and resources, thereby helping to prevent infection by harmful bacteria, fungi, and parasites

**Work at feeling emotionally balanced.**

As mentioned above, stress can interfere with your ability to clean your colon through its effect on your enteric nervous system. A lot of people who have colon-related health issue have had significant emotional stress in their lives.

If you have a challenge with colon and rectal health, I encourage you to take a careful look at ways that you can minimize emotional stress in your life.

Here's the bottom line on this topic: Your body is well designed to keep your colon and rectal regions clean and healthy. If you follow the steps outlined above, you can rest assured knowing that your lifestyle choices are minimizing your risk of having colon-related health issues.
WHAT IS DIETARY FIBER?
Dietary fiber is found only in plant foods. It is composed of a group of structurally related substances: cellulose, hemicelluloses, lignin, gums and pectins. Good sources of dietary fiber include whole grains, vegetables, fruit, nuts and seeds. Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, dairy products, fats, oils and sugar contain no dietary fiber.

WHY SHOULD WE INCLUDE DIETARY FIBER IN OUR DIETS?
Some of the benefits of dietary fiber are to increase fecal bulk, soften stools, stimulate the healthy movement of food and waste products through the digestive tract and assist the muscles of the digestive tract. Consuming high fiber foods thus may help prevent and treat constipation. In addition, researchers have shown that dietary fiber can play an important role in the prevention or treatment of various diseases and disorders. These include obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, colon cancer, diverticulitis and irritable bowel syndrome, as well as constipation.

WHAT ARE SOLUBLE AND INSOLUBLE FIBERS?
Dietary fiber is frequently classified as soluble or insoluble. Soluble fibers dissolve in water and consist of pectins, gums and some hemicelluloses. Insoluble fibers do not dissolve in water and consist of cellulose, lignin and some hemicelluloses. Soluble fiber has been shown to be effective in reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes by reducing total blood cholesterol and regulating blood sugar levels. Insoluble fiber has been shown to be effective in reducing the risk of colon cancer, preventing diverticulitis disease and treating constipation.

WHAT ARE SOME SOURCES OF SOLUBLE AND INSOLUBLE FIBERS?
Ideally, we should incorporate both soluble and insoluble fibers in our diets. Good sources of soluble fiber include oats, barley, legumes (dried beans and peas) and some vegetables and fruits. Good sources of insoluble fiber include whole grain products (breads, cereals, rice, pasta), nuts, seeds and some vegetables.

HOW MUCH DIETARY FIBER SHOULD WE CONSUME EACH DAY?
Experts are now recommending a dietary fiber intake in the range of 25 - 35 grams/day for the healthy adult. The average American consumes between 5-15 grams/day - well below the current recommendations.

CAN PROBLEMS ARISE FROM EATING TOO MUCH DIETARY FIBER?
Yes. Dietary fiber, if increased suddenly, can cause gas, constipation and bloating. It should be added gradually, allowing time for your body to adjust to the extra fiber. For example, begin by increasing your fiber intake to 20 grams/day; allow a few days for adjustment, and then increase it to 25 grams/day. As you add fiber to your diet, it is very important to drink plenty of fluids, since fiber draws water into the intestines. Health care providers recommend at least eight glasses of water each day. Although excessive intakes of dietary fiber may interfere with the absorption of some nutrients, moderate intakes (i.e., 20 - 35 grams/day) do not appear to pose a problem for the healthy adult.
Energy density and weight loss: Feel full on fewer calories

Choosing foods that are less concentrated with calories (but packed with nutritiously dense food) — meaning you get a larger portion size with a fewer number of calories — can help you lose weight and control your hunger.

Feel full on fewer calories? It might sound like another gimmick for weight loss, but it's not. Rather, it's putting the concept of energy density into practice to help with your weight loss. Indeed it will help you to feel satisfied with fewer calories. By consuming fewer calories (but more dense foods), you can lose weight over time and keep it off long term.

Weight loss with more food, fewer calories

Simply put, energy density is the number of calories (energy) in a specific amount of food. High energy density means that there are a lot of calories in a little food. Low energy density means there are few calories in a lot of food.

When you're striving for weight loss, the goal is to eat low-energy-dense foods. That is, you want to eat a greater volume of food that's lower in calories. This helps you feel fuller on fewer calories. Here's a quick example with raisins and grapes. Raisins have a high energy density — 1 cup of raisins has about 434 calories. Grapes have a low energy density — 1 cup of grapes has about 104 calories.

The keys to energy density and weight loss

Three main factors play a role in what makes food high or low in energy density:

- **Water.** Many fruits and vegetables are high in water content, which provides volume and weight but not calories. That's why they're low-energy-dense foods. Grapefruit, for example, is about 90 percent water. Half a grapefruit has just 39 calories. Raw, fresh carrots are about 88 percent water. Half a cup has only about 25 calories.

- **Fiber.** High-fiber foods not only provide volume, but also take longer to digest, making you feel full longer on fewer calories. Classic examples are vegetables, fruits and whole grains.

- **Fat.** Fat is high in energy density. One teaspoon of butter, for example, contains almost the same number of calories as 2 cups of low-energy-dense raw broccoli. Most fruits and vegetables don't contain a lot of fat. Foods that contain fat naturally, such as dairy products and various meats, or foods with added fats are higher in calories than their leaner or lower fat counterparts.
Your Best Food Choices

Changing lifestyle habits is never easy, and creating an eating plan using the energy-density concept is no exception. The first step is knowing which foods are better options when it comes to energy density. Here's a look at energy density by the categories in the Mayo Clinic Healthy Weight Pyramid.

- **Vegetables.** Most vegetables are low in calories but high in volume. Examples include — salad greens, asparagus, green beans, broccoli and zucchini. To add more vegetables to your diet, top your pasta with sauteed vegetables instead of meaty or cheesy sauces. Decrease the pasta size portion on your plate and increase the serving of vegetables. Add vegetables to your sandwiches. Snack on raw vegetables.

- **Fruits.** Practically all types of fruit fit into a healthy diet. But some fruits are lower calorie choices than others are. Whole fresh, frozen and canned fruits without added sugar are good options. In contrast, fruit juices and dried fruits are concentrated sources of natural sugar and therefore have a high energy density — more calories — and they don't fill you up as much. To fit more fruits into your diet, add blueberries to your cereal in the morning. Try mango or peach slices on whole-wheat toast with a little peanut butter and honey. Or toss some mandarin orange and peach slices into a salad.

- **Carbohydrates.** Many carbohydrates are either grains or made from grains, such as cereal, rice, bread and pasta. Whole grains are the best option because they're higher in fiber and other important nutrients. To include more whole grains in your diet, simply choose whole-wheat bread, whole-wheat pasta, oatmeal, brown rice and whole-grain cereal instead of refined grains.

- **Protein and dairy.** These include food from both plant and animal sources. The healthiest low-energy-dense choices are foods that are high in protein but low in fat and calories, such as legumes (beans, peas and lentils, which are also good sources of fiber), fish, skinless white-meat poultry, fat-free dairy products and egg whites.

- **Fats.** While fats are high-energy-dense foods, some fats are healthier than others. Include small amounts of healthy monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats in your diet. Nuts, seeds, flax oil, and vegetable oils, such as olive and safflower oils, contain healthy fats.

- **Sweets.** Like fats, sweets are typically high in energy density. Good options for sweets include ones that are low in added fat and that contain healthy ingredients, such as fruits, whole grains and low-fat dairy. Examples include fresh fruit topped with low-fat yogurt, a cookie made with whole-wheat flour or a scoop of low-fat ice cream. The keys to sweets are to keep the serving size small and the ingredients healthy — even a piece of dark chocolate fits.

Making energy density work for you

When you stick to the concept of energy density, you don't have to feel hungry or deprived. By including plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains in your diet, you can feel full on fewer calories. You may even have room in your diet for a tasty sweet on occasion. By eating larger portions of low-energy-density foods, you squelch those hunger pains, take in fewer calories and feel better about your meal, which contributes to how satisfied you feel overall.
**Week 6 & 7 Objectives**

It’s all about perseverance at this point! Consistency will be key from here on out. The more you do the program correctly the easier it gets and the better your results will be.

Reflect back on where you were 6 weeks ago, and compare your eating style now to the way it was back then. I’m willing to bet it has SIGNIFICANTLY improved. Give yourself credit where credit is due. Pat yourself on your back for a job well done. You have come a long way, and your food choices now have a much higher nutritional punch than what you used to eat. We are proud of each and every one of you! Keep up the great work!

**Week 6**

As presented in week 5’s lecture, it’s time to go back and “start over” now that you have a stronger knowledge base when it comes to food choices. This week we want you to think about what we were taught in week 2. Protein and Water! It’s time to make sure your proteins are in, and if they are go over them! The more you eat of the leanest (plant preferred) will net you quicker results. If you are still struggling to reach your protein need, it’s this week to figure out where you are running low. Is it every breakfast or are you having a hard time getting enough protein in each snack? Go back and review your food journal and search for consistently low protein levels throughout the day. This will help you to identify where it is you are running low and then you can focus on that particular meal/snack time throughout the week to insure your taking in adequate amounts.

It’s also time to look at your daily water intake. Have you been logging your water amounts taken in daily? If not, you should have been, and it’s time to start. If you have not been drinking enough water you have to remember without enough water in, the salts in your food will make you retain the water inside your body and make you hold onto your weight and also cause medical complications such as hypertension. Hit your water number this week!!

**Week 7**

Now, go back and remember week “3”. What was it we taught? It was the Carb lecture! Now is the time to make sure you are ONLY eating complex carbs throughout the week. If you consume much more than one serving of a simple carb, you are at a risk for gaining weight for the week’s weigh-in. “ALL CARBS MUST PASS THE CARB FORMULA”. By week 7 you should be able to tell us without looking what the carb formula is. If you do not know, it’s time to memorize it.

TIMING OF CARBS IS EVERYTHING! When it comes to really trying to lose belly-weight, you have to do your best to eat the right type of carbohydrate at the right time. Belly weight indicates a body that has high insulin levels and to help control those levels, it’s the right carbs at the right time to do this! Remember the 5-4-3-2-1 plan. With carbs its: 4 servings of vegetables; 3 servings of fruits; and 2 servings of grains. Cut the grains out after the lunch meal. With each snack you MUST consume a vegetable, NOT a fruit. The fruits are with the three meals throughout the day. AVOID THE SIMPLE CARBS!

Remember: We do not expect perfection, when life throws a wrench in, you do the best you can and don’t fret so much over the fact you are not “perfect”, because NO ONE IS!