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The Dish With Monetta Harr



Calorie counter a must

Posted by Monetta Harr | Jackson Citizen Patriot July 14, 2008 09:35AM

Categories: Health

Allan Borushek has become one of my best friends, and I've never met him.

Borushek has compiled the 20th anniversary edition of "The Calorie King, a calorie, fat & carbohydrate counter," a pocket-size book that also includes information from 200 fast-food chains and restaurants. Equally as popular is www.CalorieKing.com.

The book sells a million copies around the world each year, and the Web site is free.

I have relied on this book for the past month, as I work hard to improve my diet and increase my exercise because blood work this spring revealed my total cholesterol was high.

My doctor agreed to give me until August to see if I can drop the numbers before I rely on medicine. I've been blogging about this journey several times a week and many readers have posted positive messages to me.

I've relied on "The Calorie King" in keeping my food journal, which helps me stay under my limit of 1,300 calories a day. Even though I've written about food for years, reading through Borushek's book has been eye-opening. For instance, in the beginning he has a chart about fat that begins with a 3-ounce potato (0 fat and 65 calories) and ends with 3 ounces of potato chips (30 g fat, 450 calories). That makes it easy to ignore the chips served with a healthy sandwich.

Along the way, I e-mailed rather than called Borushek, a dietitian, because he lives in Australia.

People rely on the book for many reasons, he wrote, because nutritional information on food packages these days is often confusing.

He breaks down some foods, for example, milk. Besides the calories for 1 cup, he has it for 1 tablespoon, a 12-ounce glass, a pint or quart.

People who keep a food journal, he wrote, "are far more successful at losing weight and keeping it off, than those who don't. Additionally, keeping a journal can help prevent "calorie amnesia," the forgetfulness that occurs after successful weight loss."

"We can easily kid ourselves that we can now eat "forbidden foods" more often since we supposedly know how to take the weight off should we regain weight. The problem is we lose the daily discipline that made weight loss successful in the first place," he wrote.

Borushek said people struggling to lose weight share common threads.

"One is lack of motivation and our taste buds win out. Another is that people are not willing to make difficult choices consistently. For others, it's they don't have the self-confidence to believe they can persevere, so they sabotage their own efforts. Yet others look at past efforts and assume if they failed before they will fail again," he wrote.

Stay tuned. It has been an interesting summer.