

The Power of Monitoring

Keeping a record of your behavior, or *monitoring* yourself, can be a powerful tool to help change your behavior. Research across different types of health behavior shows the effectiveness of monitoring. For example, the National Weight Control Registry collects data on thousands of people who have successfully lost weight and kept it off. One finding is that people who weigh themselves regularly are more likely to both lose weight and keep it off. Here are some monitoring tips.

Write things down. Keep track of what you do. For instance, write down your weight, how and when you exercise, or what and when you eat. Use Step Ahead's Physical Activity and Eating Logs and Weight Change Chart in your Employee Resource Book and at www.stepaheadprogram.org, or other log formats.

Use the information to set goals, track progress and solve problems. Monitoring helps you understand your starting point, set goals, track progress, and set new goals. You may discover a difference between what you *think* you do and what you *actually* do. Monitoring can help you see patterns and challenges and come up with solutions. Your food records might show that large

flavored coffee drinks are your downfall, or that the pre-dinner hour is a heavy munching time for you. Once you know this, you can identify possible changes to make. Or, imagine that your goal is to walk more each day. To start, time your walking for a few days or wear a step counter. Then look for ways to add time or steps. Park farther away from the building or walk on a break or while you meet with a co-worker. Set a target, work your way up to it, and then set a higher target!

Be Honest and Complete. This record helps YOU. You may be tempted to leave out foods that you think you should not eat from your food log. But the more honest you are with yourself, the more helpful your records will be. Monitoring can help you to find your own trouble spots and make changes.

Be Forgiving. Remember that we all have days that are more difficult than others. The most important thing is to keep trying. If you get off to a slow start or have a bad day, don't be too hard on yourself. Make the next meal healthier or add in a bit of activity in the next few hours.

Recipe of the Week – Rich and Creamy Zucchini Lasagna (serves 6)

Save this and all of the other January recipes for entrees for your play-off parties.

- ½ lb. whole wheat lasagna noodles
- ¾ cup part-skim mozzarella cheese, grated
- 1 ½ cups fat-free cottage cheese or fat-free ricotta
- ¼ cup reduced-fat Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 ½ cup raw zucchini, sliced
- 2 ½ cups tomato sauce, no added salt preferred
- 2 tsp. basil, dried
- 2 tsp. oregano, dried
- ¼ cup onion, chopped
- 2 - 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1/8 tsp. black pepper
- 1 Tbsp. reduced fat Parmesan cheese, grated

- Preheat oven to 350 °F. Lightly spray 9x13" baking dish with vegetable oil spray.
- In medium bowl, mix well mozzarella, ¼ cup

- Parmesan and cottage cheese. Set aside.
- Combine tomato sauce with remaining ingredients, except 1 Tbsp. Parmesan. Spread thin layer of tomato sauce in bottom of baking dish. Add a third of noodles in single layer. Spread half of cottage cheese mixture on top. Add a layer of zucchini, using half.
- Repeat layering. Add thin coating of sauce. Top with noodles, sauce, and 1 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese. Cover with aluminum foil.
- Bake for 40 - 45 minutes, uncover the last 10 minutes. It should be bubbly in the center. Cool for 10–15 minutes before serving.

Nutrition information: Calories: 280, Total Fat: 4.6g
Saturated Fat: 2.5g, Carbohydrates: 43g,
Dietary Fiber: 5.2g, Protein: 18g

Tip of the Week Try whole wheat pita bread for your sandwich instead of a wrap. Pita bread has much less fat than a wrap! Some pitas can be split around the edge into two circles for wrapping food like a wrap. If you make a pita "wrap", eat it right away; it gets soggy quickly.