



K-State Extension Connection

Finding Reliable Nutrition Information on the Web

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The Keto diet, the DASH diet, the Paleo diet. What about Intermittent Fasting? With the start of a new year, many people set New Year's resolutions with hopes of making some sort of change in their life. A top New Year's resolution is to eat better and lose weight. And a popular source people look to for nutrition information is the internet.

You can find reliable nutrition information on the web, but you need to be careful where you look and what websites you trust.

Jody Gatewood, Registered Dietitian with Iowa State University Extension offers these five tips for finding trustworthy nutrition information online.



- **Consider the source.** Choose most often sites that have web addresses that end in .gov, .edu, or .org. These are most often websites for government agencies, educational institutions, and professional organizations.
- **Know the site's purpose.** Is it to provide information or to sell something? If available, read the "About" section of the site to help determine the reliability of the information on the site.
- **Look for the evidence.** Health decisions are best based on medical and scientific research, not on opinion. Look to see the sources of information for the website. Be cautious of sites that offer information from a single source.
- **Check the date.** Health information is continually changing. Check the bottom of the page to find out how recently it was updated or reviewed.
- **Visit a health professional.** Online health information should not replace talking with your physician or other health professionals.

A few trustworthy sites to get you started include: www.choosemyplate.gov, www.eatright.org, and <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/>.

Remember, although the latest diet may seem appealing, **just because a diet is popular doesn't mean that it is effective or good for you.** If you are considering going on a diet, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does the diet promise rapid weight loss (e.g. Lose 10 pounds in one week)?

2. Does the diet require rigid menus of a limited number of foods to be eaten at a specific time of day?
3. Does the diet use pictures and testimonials rather than scientific evidence?
4. Does the diet claim that you can lose weight without exercise?
5. Does an element of the diet have warnings against it? (e.g. FDA has warnings against an ingredient in a fad diet supplement)
6. Does the diet eliminate one or more of the five food groups?
7. Does the diet require you to skip meals?
8. Does the diet encourage the purchase of special products – food, pills, herbs, seminars?
9. Does the diet claim to be suitable for everyone or not warn people with diabetes or high blood pressure to seek medical advice before starting the diet?
10. Does the diet cost a lot of money?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, you are looking at a “fad” diet. Steer clear of it!

In order to maintain a healthy weight, a lifestyle change needs to occur that includes a balanced diet and physical activity. A better plan is to adopt the idea that what you eat significantly affects your health. Each food group provides its own unique set of vitamins, minerals, and energy for the body. Try to wean yourself from sweetened beverages, packaged foods, and sugars. Then try to implement changes that are compatible with your lifestyle, work schedule, and individual tastes. It can help to focus on reducing or eliminating highly processed foods in your eating plan.

Find more information about these programs and others, by contacting the Wildcat Extension District offices at: Crawford County, 620-724-8233; Labette County, 620-784-5337; Montgomery County, 620-331-2690; Wilson County, 620-378-2167; Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Wildcat District Extension is on the Web at <http://www.wildcatdistrict.ksu.edu>. Or, like our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district.

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