Apps for healthy eating

Almost every person has a smart phone that they use to make phone calls, or if under 30 years of age, text, face book or twitter. Now you can also use it as a calorie guide and exercise monitor.

Below are a few apps that you can download for free or a slight one-time charge to monitor your calorie intake. Having said that, the foods selected might not be exactly what you consume as they are stock foods in the application itself.

- Fooducate
- Shopwell
- CalorieCounterPro
- MyDiet Coach
- Diet Point Weight Loss
- Nutrino
- MyFitnessPal
- SparkPeople
- The Whole Pantry
- FoodAdditives2
- LivestrongCalorieTracker
- RestaurantNutrition
- FatSecret

All of these apps are slightly different and some allow for more detailed information to be edited in to program. Some people like a basic plan that will provide total calories, fat, protein and carbohydrate while others prefer a breakdown of fats (saturated, polyunsaturated, monounsaturated), carbohydrates and fiber. If you are tech savoy you will probably like a more detailed app. Your preference will determine which app is right for you.

For those who know my preference it should be more detailed with a section to edit in symptoms, sleep, water intake and bowel movements. Writing down what you eat or putting it in an app is also a good deterrent. That little piece of pie that would normally be considered a sliver then forgotten just boosted your intake over the daily goal.

Many people think they are eating healthy and more times than not eating more calories than they actually think they are. Calories are not equal. For instance, if your goal is 1600 calories per day, there needs to be a percentage of protein, fat, carbohydrate and fiber. My clients are surprised to find disproportionate percentages of fiber to carbohydrate intake, higher saturated fat and omega 6 fatty acid (vegetable oil), than a healthy omega 3 fatty acid (fish oil). Restaurants are another story. I stopped in a fast food place the other day (to get decaf coffee) and posted along side the pictures of gross food was the calorie total for each mega meal. What they left out are the condiments such as ketchup and salad dressings. So might as well add another 200 calories to the 800-1000 calorie meal. Sit down restaurants do the same. They leave out butter, sour cream, sauces and dressings on their menus.

Future apps will be able to monitor your pulse rate, blood pressure and blood glucose level. We are in the infancy of the app world. Many still need tweaking, but the app world is off to a good start.

Tracking your food intake on a daily basis is a good learning tool especially when you are first moving towards a healthier lifestyle and eating plan.