Narrator:

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program, keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Nicki Donnelson:

Food fuels us. That's what we should use it for: fuel. Unfortunately, too many people have unhealthy relationships with food which as contributed to an epidemic of obesity in the United States. I’m Nicki Donnelson. Today on the Missouri State Journal, I have Natalie Allen. She is a registered dietitian and shares duties between the Biomedical Studies and Athletic Departments at Missouri State University. Today she shares about recent trends in dieting.

Natalie Allen:

One of the trends that I'm seeing the most right now is intermittent fasting, and that’s where people limit the duration during a day that they want to eat. So, maybe they’re going to eat from 10 AM to 4 PM in a six hour period. Or they eat a lot in one day and a little bit the next day. That's another type of intermittent fasting. What we know on studies is that it doesn’t appear to promote more weight loss than a healthy eating plan with exercise. Where I think intermittent fasting can be helpful are people who are late night eaters and that does tend to be a time that we sometimes overindulge and eat when we’re not hungry. So, if that’s you, it might be helpful to say, “okay I'm not going to eat after 6 PM”. But as far as sticking to a strict regimen about hours that you eat, that doesn’t seem to be really beneficial for the body. It's not harmful either, but for a lot of people it creates a lot of stress, and a lot of energy is wasted on it. So, don’t get caught up on that. Look more at your overall day.

Nicki Donnelson:

The other major trend she mentioned was the ketogenic, or “high fat” diet. She tells us more.

Natalie Allen:

That's a really hard diet to follow long term. Your body is not naturally in a state of ketosis. That's where you’re using fat for energy instead of carbohydrates. And so, I would not recommend that for the general public just because it’s just a lot of effort, a lot of time, and people get frustrated and don’t do it and they tend then to overeat.

Nicki Donnelson:

Allen notes that the ketogenic diet was originally developed to help children with epilepsy. She explains it is not as sustainable, therefore, maybe not as effective for the average person.

Natalie Allen:

It’s a really hard diet to follow, and then, it is limiting some foods we know have nutritional value. You get less fiber, potentially less vitamins. The studies are in the works right now. Some people are seeing an increase in some unhealthy things related to heart, also blood pressure may or may not be affected blood sugar also. But, on the flip side, if somebody is able to lose weight on the ketogenic diet, all of those things generally improve. So, I think the bottom line comes down to: does the ketogenic diet help people lose weight? And the answer is yes if you can maintain it. It's just that in a lot of studies people struggle to maintain the diet. It's eating a lot of fat and a lot of foods that they like maybe but cutting out a lot of foods that they like too. Like no pizza, no spaghetti, no taco shells, and so all of the- a lot of my patients get frustrated, and they just quit. And so, it’s a better option to try to look at moderation and just balance with it and what works for you. And that’s the number one thing moving into the new year I would suggest to people is: find what works for you. And for most people, it’s having a plan.

Nicki Donnelson:

Instead of trying to lose weight via a “diet”, Allen offers suggestions for improving your likelihood for making smarter eating decisions.

Natalie Allen:

So, I think a better option is to think, “Okay, how can I meal plan? How can I look at what I'm going to do during the week?”, and my advice to people is always pick a day, typically a Saturday or Sunday, and pick four meals you want to make. Because the rest of the time you can eat something simple, or you can have leftovers, or you can go out to eat. So, plan four meals, get an app on your phone where you can have your grocery list on it, and then do that during the week. That will make your life a lot easier if you have a plan. Keep your recipes all in one place that you like. Do you want to bookmark them? Do you want to print them all and put them in a folder? Do you want to have them in an online site? Lots of ways to do that, but how can you access those easily? Have your recipes, have an app and do online grocery shopping, and plan at least four meals a week. Then you can plan the meals that you like. So, if you are going to try to eat a little bit more protein or you want to add more fruits and vegetables, you want to add more whole grains, more healthy fats, whatever your goal is, you have control of that as you’re planning throughout the week.

Nicki Donnelson:

That was Natalie Allen. I’m Nicki Donnelson for the Missouri State Journal.

Narrator:

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