Narrator:

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

Nicki Donnelson:

It’s tradition. Each year people talk about wanting to lose weight after the holidays. For many, they may just actually mean they need to detox from all the additional sugars, fats, and alcohol consumed over the holiday season. I’m Nicki Donnelson. Today on The Missouri State Journal, I have Natalie Allen. She is a registered dietician and shares duties between the Biomedical Studies and Athletic Departments at Missouri State University. She starts by offering some tips for goalsetting in the New Year.

Natalie Allen:

I think it’s great when people set health goals to get back on track in the new year, and one of the best things we can do is to take small steps. So, let’s not bite off too much, but set reasonable goals. So, maybe your goal is to change your hydration or what you’re drinking. So, decrease some that maybe isn’t as good and add more water. But not- your goal doesn’t become on day one to drink sixteen cups of water in a day, but maybe add a little bit more before lunch, drink a certain amount after dinner, drink a certain amount and make those manageable and realistic. You’re much more likely to stick with it.

Nicki Donnelson:

If you’ve overindulged at the holidays, Allen says not to worry. You may continue to crave sweets, but she says that one way to trick yourself into satiating that sweet tooth is by replacing them with healthier or more natural sugars.

Natalie Allen:

First of all, I think it’s really normal at the holidays to eat some treats and things we wouldn’t normally eat and that’s an important tradition for a lot of people and certainly part of it. Remember at the holidays, if you can, take a step back, maybe don’t overindulge every day, right? But be realistic too and that it’s very normal to have a cookie or a piece of pie or your grandma’s favorite pumpkin cake or whatever. So, I think let’s give ourselves some grace there in the holidays, and then, as we move into the new year, the resolution is to kind of decrease some of those things like the fat, the sugar, the carbs. Again, let’s look at replacing those with healthier options because all of those things provide energy in the body. So, we want people to be eating carbohydrates, but maybe instead of something that has a lot of added sugar, you eat something with more natural sugar like fruit, or you make a smoothie that has vegetables, fruit, and maybe some yogurt in it. And so, not only are you getting a lot more nutrition when you do that, but you’re also satisfying that sweet tooth and it doesn’t make so much change for the body and for you that you feel like you’re missing out on something. So, think what can I substitute and what is realistic for me as I move in that direction?

Nicki Donnelson:

You may be considering adding more movement and activity into your daily routine to reach your new goals. Allen gives us tips to fuel that energy.

Natalie Allen:

That's a great question because we certainly know that activity is really vital for health as people age. So, while diet and nutrition are really important, exercise is equally as important to maintain strength and balance and muscle mass. And as somebody increases those things, the number one thing to look at is protein intake. So, we want people to be getting adequate protein and that varies depending on your body weight, but meat is your best source of protein. Any kind of meat, they’re all equal as far as protein; seven grams per ounce of cooked meat. And then, your next bet is nuts and dairy and eggs. So, when people start working out, my question is, “do you have a protein source at each meal?”. So, if your breakfast is a piece of toast with butter, that’s not bad, but that’s not a lot of protein. So, let’s add peanut butter to it or drink milk with it or fry an egg and put it on your toast. How can you just make little changes to your meals to get more protein? That's the most important nutrient for most people in athletics as they are moving forward. Another thing is we do want them to be getting healthy carbs, and carbs sometimes get a bad rap. So, it depends on where are you getting your carbohydrates, are you getting them from things like sweet potatoes and apples and fruits and corn and things that have nutrition as well? And we want people to get those. Certainly, pastas and rice and bread and grains, those are great too. Those should be about half the plate. A fourth of the plate should be protein, and a fourth of the plate should be fruits and vegetables.

Nicki Donnelson:

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

Narrator:

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