

The Happy & Healthy Dining Hall Nutrition Communication on Campus

Carolyn O'Neil MS, RDN

Enjoy the taste of eating right



Carolyn O'Neil, MS RDN LDN

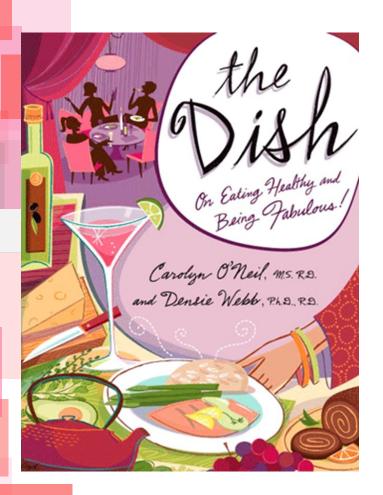
- Food & Nutrition Podcast host
- "Watch What You Eat" with Carolyn O'Neil
- Food & Travel Writer: VIE, OLTRE
- Nutrition Advisor: Southern Living, Forbes Health
- Professor of Journalism, Emory University
- Professor Nutrition Science, Florida State University, London Study Centre
- Mentor to dietetics students interested in nutrition communication
- "Lady of the Refrigerator", Good Eats with Alton Brown, The Food Network

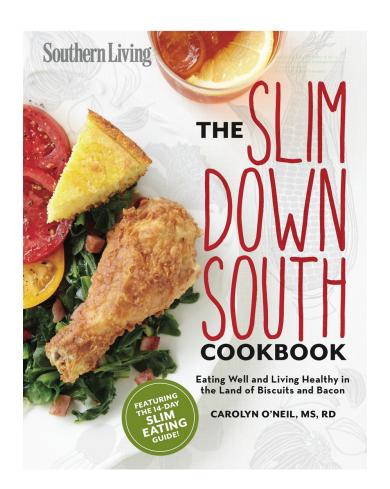
Food Network "Lady of the Refrigerator" Good Eats with Alton Brown



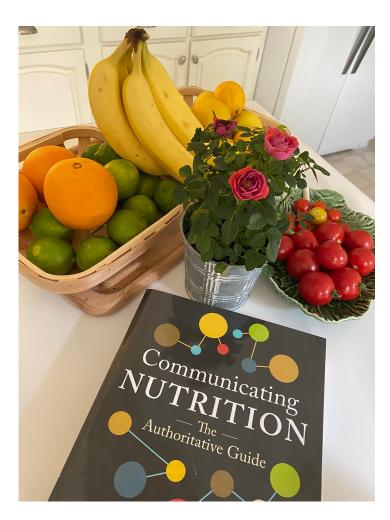
I thought dietitians worked in hospitals?



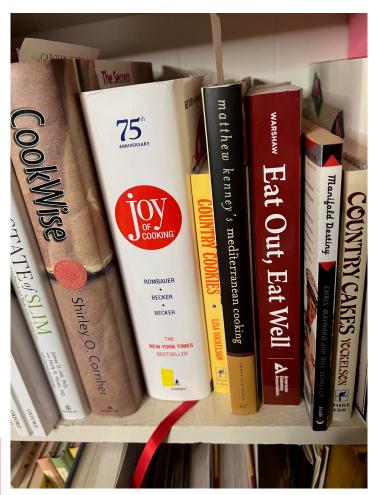


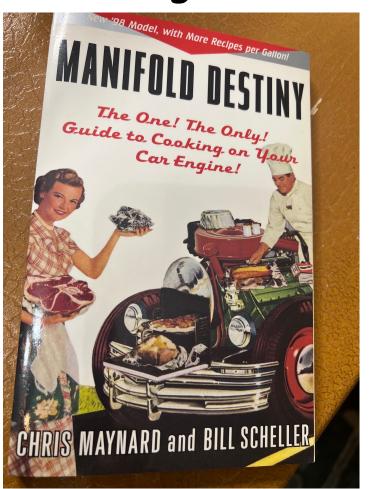


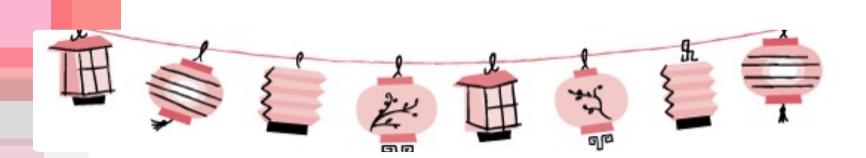
Communicating Nutrition: contributing author



Food Stories: Serious to Silly







Food is more than just something to eat....it's fashion, entertainment, travel, art, medicine, culture, sports, history, crime, comedy...

Media Messages: What We Learned About Nutrition

"What you eat can kill you"

- Diet and Cancer
- Diet and Heart Disease
- Food Borne Illness
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Plastics
- Pesticides
- Chemical residues



Media Messages: What We Learned About Nutrition

"What you eat can **cure** you"

- Protein
- •Fiber
- Organic everything
- Probiotics
- Antioxidants
- Plant Based
- Nutrient of the day
- Mediterranean Diet
- Grass Fed

Remember Red wine & Oatmeal?



Nutrition

 Long associated with a long list of all of the foods you're not supposed to eat-no salt, no fat, no cholesterol, no sugar, no taste, no

fun, no way.

Also Nutrition

 A new age of nutrition discovery emphasizing the foods and beverages you should be ADDING to your diet for optimal health.



Lots of talk about diet and nutrition today..



Translating Nutrition Science into Motivating Messages

Liven Up Lessons on Healthy Food Choices



Tailored to Fit: "Are You Talking to Me?"



How to Boil Water

A "voice lesson" from Martha Holmberg, food writer, cookbook author and magazine editor.

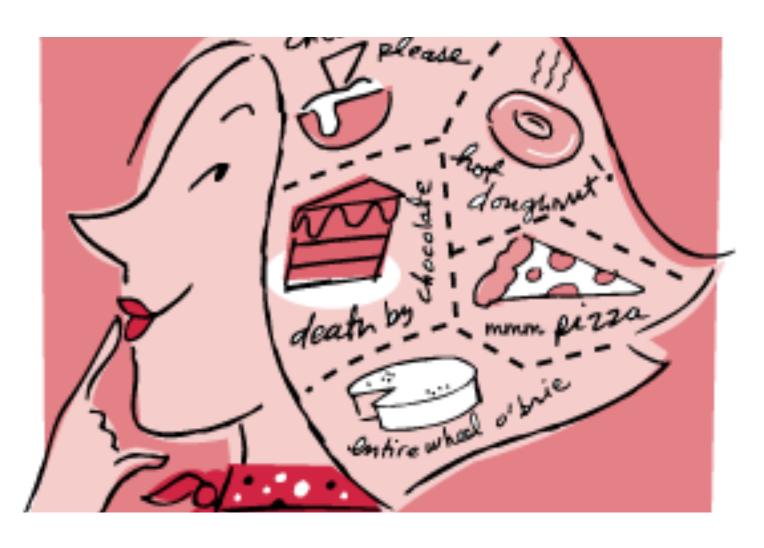


Design new nutrition messages with the history of old messages in mind





Consider specific food concerns, beliefs or discomforts



"What's in it for me?"



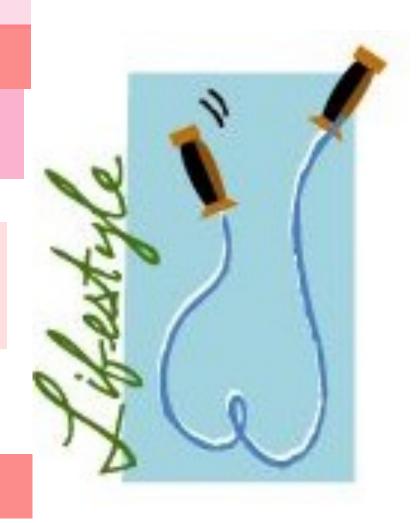
Present Payoffs for Healthy Lifestyle Choices

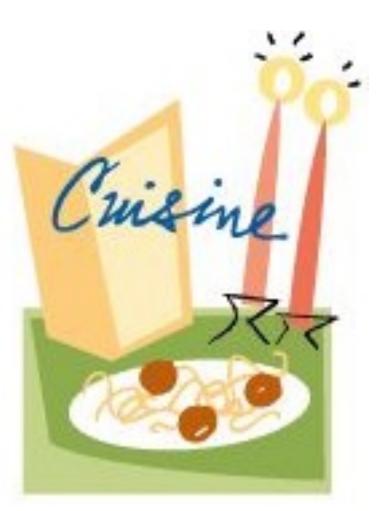


This just in: proper sleep boosts metabolism!



Customize diet and nutrition advice for age, lifestyle and attitude

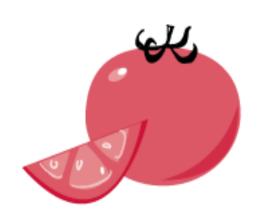


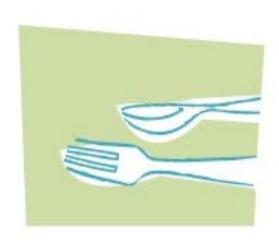


Define the Nutrition Basics: "Are we on the same page?"



Is your definition of healthy the same as theirs?





Translate science-based facts into realistic how-to advice



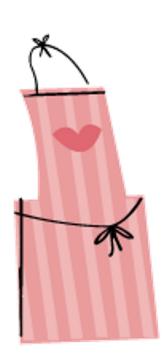
Before:

"To reduce sodium content of meals use herbs and spices in cooking to add flavor instead of salt."

After:

"Shake your salt habit and keep your taste buds excited by adding sodium-free herbs and spices such as paprika and parsley, fresh ground pepper and cinnamon."





Before:

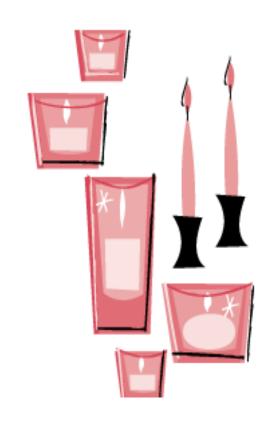
"Increasing the duration and intensity of activities of daily living can add significantly to energy expenditure."

After: "Can you pace while on the phone? Take you date dancing instead of a movie? Walk the dog? Then you're boosting your calorie burn by adding more movement without finding extra time to exercise."



 Before: "Develop behavior modification strategies to cope with events and emotions that trigger overeating."

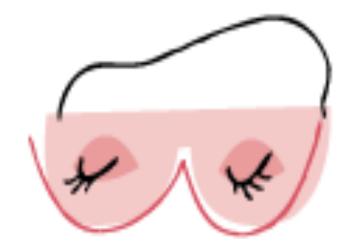
AFTER: "Instead of reaching for high calorie comfort foods to cope with the times you're angry, bored, or tense discover your "inner spa" by sipping herbal tea, taking a bath or listening to music."



 Before: "Vitamin C promotes skin cell integrity because it plays a vital role in the development of collagen."

AFTER:

"Did you know healthy skin craves citrus, tomatoes and berries? Serve up sources of vitamin C to build collagen, the glue that gives skin its wrinkle-preventing elasticity."



Macronutrient Balance

BEFORE:

Optimal ratios of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats for energy, muscle maintenance, and cognitive function

Macronutrient Balance

AFTER:

"Power your plate with a palm-sized portion of protein, a fist of complex carbs, and a thumb of healthy fats to keep your energy steady through that 3-hour lecture and evening study session."





Energy Density vs. Nutrient Density



Complex concept: Distinguishing between calorie-rich, nutrient-poor foods and nutrient-rich, moderately caloric options



Translation example: "Choose foods that give you more bang for your buck—a yogurt parfait with berries and granola provides protein, calcium, and antioxidants, unlike a pastry that offers mainly quick energy."

Appeal to Immediate Benefits

"Choosing the grilled chicken wrap instead of nuggets and fries can help you avoid that post-lunch energy crash during your 2PM class. You'll stay alert through the lecture and actually remember what was covered."

Connect to Performance Goals

"Think of your dining hall plate as pre-gaming for your best performance. The salmon and roasted vegetables option will fuel your brain for that paper you're writing tonight in ways that fried foods simply can't."

Offer Practical Upgrades

"Still craving something crispy? Grab a small side of fries but pair them with a turkey sandwich and vegetable soup instead of making fries your entire meal. You'll satisfy the craving while still getting nutrients that keep you going."

Frame in Terms of Independence

"Making intentional food choices is part of creating your own college identity. Anyone can default to nuggets every day—showing you can navigate the dining hall strategically demonstrates you're thinking for yourself."

Highlight Social Benefits

"Notice how your friends who make balanced choices seem to have more consistent energy for both studying and socializing? That's not coincidence—it's nutrition at work."

Use Relatable Analogies

"Your brain is basically running a marathon during finals week. Would you try to run 26 miles fueled only by chicken nuggets and soda? Give your brain premium fuel when it matters most."

Acknowledge Reality Without Judgment

"Nobody makes perfect choices all the time—that's not the goal. Even swapping out fried options just a few times a week can make a difference in how you feel."



"Drop/Add Nutrition Challenge: Remix Your Dining Hall Plate!"



The Big Idea



Transform nutrition from a chore to a strategic life skill, empowering students to make informed, intentional choices about their health.

#drop/add nutrition challenge

 Concept: Treat nutrition like course selection - strategically "dropping" less beneficial choices and "adding" nutrient-packed alternatives that support your academic and personal goals.

Example Drop/Add Scenarios

Coffee Transformation

- Drop: Extra sugary syrups and whipped cream
- Add: Sprinkle of cinnamon, dash of unsweetened almond milk
- Benefit: Reduces sugar intake, adds antioxidants, supports metabolism
- Potato Upgrade
 - Drop: Butter and sour cream
 - Add: Cottage cheese, chopped chives
 - Benefit: Increases protein, adds calcium, creates more satisfying meal
- Snack Smart
 - Drop: Vending machine chips
 - Add: Roasted chickpeas or trail mix with nuts and seeds
 - Benefit: Sustained energy, more nutrients, better focus

Drop/Add Dining Challenge

- Social Media Engagement Strategy
- Hashtag: #DropAddNutrition
- Students post before/after plate photos
- . Share their personal "drop/add" nutrition hacks
- . Tag campus dietitian or health services
- . Win potential prizes





We all need a little motivation to make changes in life.....

"The only 'carrots' I'm interested in are the number you get in a diamond."

--Mae West

Thank you so much!

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