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Are you finally ready to stick a fork in it?

April Abernethy has some ideas on how to bring healthy eating and fitness into all of your busy lifestyles

BY BARB RANDALL

The Lake Oswego Review, Jan 12, 2012.

April Abernethy wants to know if you are ready to stick a fork in it. You know, have you had enough of being unfit? Are you done obsessing about dieting and ready to reclaim your health?

If you are, she has a plan for you: the Stick a Fork in It plan.

April is the woman I go to for information about anti-inflammatory and gluten-free eating. She has founded Stick a Fork in It, a company whose mission is to help you incorporate healthy eating and fitness into your lifestyle.

April received her fitness training at Wilson College, Chambersburg, Md., where she majored in exercise sports science. She was on staff at the Wilson College Fitness Center and completed internships at the Wellness and Cardiac Rehab Center in Hagerstown, Md., and in the physical therapy department at Chambersburg Hospital. Most recently, April completed her training in naturopathic medicine at the National College of Natural Medicine in Portland.

"When I finished, I didn't think I wanted to go into a traditional medical practice," she said. "I sat and thought about what I wanted to do ... I had always enjoyed running and working out and I wanted to get back to my true self. I realized that I could better share my knowledge by helping support others in their transformations."

And the name – Stick a Fork in It – says it all.

"I like playing with names," she said. "Stick a Fork in It indicates I'm done. I've had enough and now I'm changing."

April said making nutritional changes is one of the hardest things to do. She has many colleagues who advise their patients to go dairy-free, gluten-free or follow an anti-inflammatory diet but offer no support in helping them make those adjustments. April recognized the need for patient support during the transitions.

"It's really hard to change. You understand what your doctor says and go home intent on following the advice. But what do you eat? How can we change what we eat without sacrificing nutrition? And in Portland, it's hard to get outdoors and move. But you can learn to wear the right apparel so you can walk and move more comfortably.



“I was barely able to move,” said April. “But now I am running and on track to run an 8K with sights set on running a half marathon by late summer.”

Stick a Fork in It brings April’s passions for cooking, nutrition and patient education together. She offers clients both nutritional and fitness services.

The nutritional services include meal planning by the week or month. April visits your home and learns what foods your family enjoys and plans meals they will eat. She also offers shopping education, taking you on a tour of your favorite grocery to show you the healthy choices. April will even deliver prepared meals that you can heat in the oven and eat.

Cost of the first week, which includes a 60-minute in home consultation, is \$175; subsequent weeks are \$25.

April leads a walking club and a Couch Potato to 5K program. Individual training for women with 40-plus pounds to lose is also available. Fees are really low – the drop-in price for fitness programs is \$5 per day. An 8-week session costs just \$100.

To help get you started, April shared a list of 15 foods to banish from your kitchen, which she found on care2.com. The foods are:

1. Pasteurized, homogenized milk. Care2.com advises that buying organic is a better choice, but eliminating milk from your diet would be ideal.

2. White bread. Buy organic whole grain bread made without enriched flours instead.

3. Vegetable oils. Oils are an important part of your daily diet so choose ones that are non-GMO (genetically modified organisms) and organically grown. Suggestions include olive oil, sesame oil, coconut oil, grapeseed oil and ghee (clarified butter).

4. Boxed macaroni and cheese. Opt for organic whole grain or dairy-free version or make your own from scratch.

5. Canned soups. Go instead with low sodium, organic

6. Peanut butter with additives. Explore the raw butters for a nutritious treat.

7. Breakfast cereal. Buy a whole grain cereal containing little or no sugar and sweeten to taste at the table.

8. Refined white flour. The refined gluten becomes glue in your intestines. Instead buy whole wheat, spelt and rice flours or try gluten free flour mixes,



9. Vel-veeta cheese. Anything is better than this pseudo-food product, and if you must eat cheese then opt for a raw, organic variety that retains the natural enzymes.

10. Enriched pasta. If it is enriched it is also refined flour, meaning more glue for your intestines. With so many delicious whole grain pastas now available have fun trying a nice fettuccini or a spelt angel hair for your next dinner.

11. Coffee. This crop is so highly sprayed with toxic pesticides; your better bet is to drink fair trade organic coffee.

12. Chicken eggs. Eat free range, organic eggs from a local farmer; it’s better for you and the hens.

13. Instant grains. Actually instant anything should be tagged and put out on the curb for the garbage man. Preparing whole grains from scratch is so much easier when you use a rice cooker, pressure cooker or Crock-pot.

14. Frozen dinners. If you depend on these processed, nutrition-depleted meals to see you through the day, then wear blinders when shopping. The time it takes a frozen dinner to bake in a real oven (no microwaves please), you can create a nutritious meal from scratch. If you are not convinced read the ingredients list.

15. White sugar and artificial sweeteners. You won't have to suffer sugar withdrawals when you replace the sweet taste with raw honey, maple syrup, rice syrup and the herbal sweetener stevia. And you don't know how destructive artificial sweeteners can be for your brain.

To learn more about the Stick a Fork in It program, visit www.aforkinit.com or call 971-221-5309.

April shares this recipe for Roasted Butternut Squash, a perfect side dish to serve with low fat baked chicken or a turkey burger.

Bon Appétit! Eat something wonderful!

Roasted Butternut Squash

Use either packaged precut squash or quarter and seed a whole squash. Roast at 400°F for 45 minutes. Allow squash to cool so it can be handled comfortably, then cut into cubes. Place in a shallow roasting pan and season with sea salt or kosher salt and pepper.

Toss with ¼ cup pecans and ½ cup blue cheese.

Serve with baked chicken or turkey burger.