

# ASK THE COACH

*Answers to the most common wellness questions that we get from students and from busy parents like you!*



**PARENTS: DEAR COACH, I'M ALREADY SLIPPING WITH NEW YEARS DIET RESOLUTIONS...WHAT AM I DOING WRONG?**

We are what we eat, right? So, it's logical that any sudden change in diet could have an immediate impact on our health and weight. Unfortunately, if the change includes denying ourselves of the foods that we love or nutrients that our bodies are designed to need, then it's likely that cravings will begin lurking around most corners with a formidable ambush. Additionally, excessive discipline with a new regiment or with tracking nutritional or caloric statistics can be very effective on the short term but isn't well aligned for the long haul for many personality types or with today's unpredictable and demanding schedules.

Perhaps most frustrating for the dieter is when they choose a route of deprivation only to learn later that the foods they chose were actually sabotaging them! Our clients succeed by first gaining sound nutritional guidance that is not based on a trendy dietary theory and they find ways to incorporate that knowledge into their families' existing routine, instead of trying all new approaches. Then they set realistic long-term goals and a progressive series of short term achievable "gates" along the way there. Small adjustments are the best way to realize big improvements that can be sustained!

**KID'S: HEY COACH, WHAT SHOULD I ORDER WHEN WE GO OUT TO EAT?**

Families often tell me that they had set backs over holidays or vacations due to being out of town or forced to eat in chain restaurants more

often. In our assemblies, you may have heard us talk about choosing “farm” foods over “factory” foods. In our other programs (like our after school cooking classes) we get a little deeper into the guidance on what to eat and when to eat it.

We believe that you should have meals that are dense in protein, fiber and diverse nutrients (vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals – which are the things that give “farm” foods their unique colors). You can find these foods at any restaurant! For example, every Mexican restaurant offers dishes of chicken or shrimp with black beans and vegetables (fajitas or tacos). BBQ joints are going to have chicken, baked beans, corn and dark leafy greens. I’m not suggesting that you have beans with maple syrup every night but it’s better to get the protein and fiber from the beans (even if it comes with some excess sugar) than having most things that come on a white bun and with fries on the side.

Of course, when it’s time for something to wash it down, water is always the best drink and it’s hard to become a Superhuman if you’re ordering sugary beverages and sodas.

‘Coach’ Ryan Lonnett is a Certified Health Counselor and a Commissioner / Coach in Reston Little League. Leveraging his culinary, nutrition and fitness training, Ryan founded a health practice called Empowered Wellness, whose coaches deliver both custom and group wellness programs, including after school classes in Elementary Schools. Ryan sits on several community boards and steering committees, frequently delivers presentations in school, community or corporate assemblies, and occasionally can be seen or heard in the media sharing best practices from his years of experience in this unique arena.

For more information: [www.empowered-wellness.com](http://www.empowered-wellness.com)