

Think of calories as incentives to exercise more

Kathy Hedberg The Lewiston Tribune | [0 comments](#)

This is the time of year people develop a heightened awareness of their daily intake of calories.

Not to say people don't worry about that every other day of the year as well. We're like day traders on the New York Stock Exchange when it comes to keeping track of the calories we consume and burn. We count how many we take in and then we make deals to exchange them for equal amounts of exercise. We're obsessed. We eat, we weigh, we feel guilty, we purge and then we go have a steak and a bottle of wine to celebrate our liberated consciences.

But around the holidays people are especially calorie conscious, partly because we easily could consume a month's worth of calories in one meal. And since we are trying to fit into a special outfit for the holiday parties, eating a month's worth of calories at one setting is not a really good idea.

Fortunately for those of us living in this day and age, people have made calorie counting into a science. We know, for instance, that if we choose to have a maple bar for breakfast we are going to have to take the stairs, rather than the elevator at work. Seven times, in fact. Running off those maple bar calories means that we will have to find six more good reasons to run back to our car during the day, (Oh, I forgot my umbrella. I need my lip balm. I want to make sure my tires are properly inflated).

So that's our penance for eating a maple bar instead of oatmeal for breakfast. And then, if we stupidly decide to have a burger and fries for lunch instead of a chicken salad, we are going to have to enhance those seven visits back to the car by running around the block a couple of times. In fact, if you eat a burger and fries for lunch, you might as well leave your car in the parking lot at work and run home instead.

For those of us living more than 50 miles away from the office, that's pretty good assurance you will balance out the calorie input/outgo ratio for the day. But if you, on your 50 mile run back home, stop to eat a couple of chocolate chip cookies you're going to have to make a couple of laps around town once you get there.

Calories are devilish little blobs of fat and energy that are no bigger than a pinhead. And yet, look at the way they dictate how we live our lives.

I'm looking forward to turkey and stuffing, mashed potatoes and gravy and a big slice of pumpkin pie with real whipped cream when I visit relatives in southern Idaho later this week. I counted up the calories in that meal and I figure that if I eat all that, along with the other accoutrements I expect to be present at the Thanksgiving meal, I will need to walk back home from my relatives' house in order to work it all off.

They live in Boise.

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