Calorie Giving Challenge

CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION:

Welcome to the Calorie Giving Challenge! Over the next five days, you'll track the calories you eat and donate an equivalent amount of healthy food to help support community health. Let's work together to make a positive impact on our health and our community! Eating healthy foods helps your body get the nutrients it needs to stay strong and fight off illnesses. Donating healthy food to those in need ensures everyone has access to nutritious meals, which helps the whole community stay healthy and happy.

WHAT IS A CALORIE?

A calorie is a unit of energy that measures how much energy food provides to your body. When you eat food, your body breaks it down and uses the energy to perform various functions like breathing, thinking, and moving. Different foods provide different amounts of energy. For example, a piece of fruit might have fewer calories than a candy bar, but the fruit provides more vitamins and nutrients that are essential for your health.

To find out how many calories are in the food you eat, you can look at the nutrition labels on food packages. These labels tell you the number of calories per serving size. For fresh foods without labels, like fruits and vegetables, you can use online resources or apps that provide calorie information. Simply search for the food item and its serving size to find out how many calories it contains.

How to Calculate Your Caloric Needs

To determine how many calories you need each day, you can use an online calorie calculator or a formula called the Harris-Benedict Equation. This formula takes into account your age, gender, weight, height, and activity level. Here's a simplified version:

- **Calculate your Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR):** This is the number of calories your body needs to maintain basic functions at rest.
    - For men: BMR = 88.362 + (13.397 x weight in kg) + (4.799 x height in cm) - (5.677 x age in years)
    - For women: BMR = 447.593 + (9.247 x weight in kg) + (3.098 x height in cm) - (4.330 x age in years)

- **Adjust for Activity Level:** Multiply your BMR by a factor that represents your activity level:
  - Sedentary (little or no exercise): BMR x 1.2
  - Lightly active (light exercise/sports 1-3 days/week): BMR x 1.375
  - Moderately active (moderate exercise/sports 3-5 days/week): BMR x 1.55
  - Very active (hard exercise/sports 6-7 days a week): BMR x 1.725
  - Super active (very hard exercise/sports and a physical job): BMR x 1.9

This will give you an estimate of how many calories you need to maintain your current weight. Adjust this number if you want to gain or lose weight.

THE CHALLENGE

By following the plan below, you'll learn more about healthy eating, help improve your community's health, and feel great about making a positive difference!

Day 1: Start Tracking Your Calories

Set Up a Food Diary: Write down everything you eat and drink throughout the day. Use a notebook or a free app to help you keep track of your calorie intake.

Learn About Calorie Needs: Find out how many calories you need each day based on your age, gender, and activity level. You can use the steps above or online calculators to help with this.

Reflective Questions
How easy or hard is it to track everything you eat?
Are you surprised by the number of calories in any foods?

Day 2: Make Healthy Choices

Focus on Nutrient-Rich Foods: Try to eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy.

Limit Junk Food: Avoid foods high in sugar, fat, and salt. Look for healthier alternatives instead.

Reflective Questions
How do you feel after eating healthier foods?
Did you find any new healthy foods that you like?

CALORIE GIVING

Day 3: Plan Your Donation

Calculate Your Total Calories: Add up the calories you've eaten over the past two days.

Match Your Donation: Plan to donate the same number of calories in healthy food to a local food bank. For example, if you ate 2,000 calories, donate 2,000 calories worth of healthy food items.

Reflective Questions
How many calories did you consume on average each day?
What healthy foods can you donate to match your calorie intake?

Day 4: Visit the Grocery Store

Buy Healthy Foods for Donation: Purchase healthy, non-perishable items like canned vegetables, whole grain pasta, brown rice, canned beans, and low-sugar cereals.

Check Labels: Look for foods low in added sugars and saturated fats.

Reflective Questions
What healthy foods are most affordable and nutritious?
How can you make sure your donation will benefit others?

Day 5: Prepare and Deliver Your Donation

Pack Your Donation: Gather the healthy foods you bought and pack them in a box or bag.

Include a Note: Write a positive note or draw a picture to include with your donation to spread some extra cheer.

Find a Local Food Bank: Look up food banks or shelters in your area that accept food donations.

Drop Off Your Donation: Deliver your healthy food donation and take a moment to reflect on how it will help others.

Reflective Questions
How does it feel to prepare a donation for others?
What message do you want to share with those who receive your donation?
How can you continue to support your community's health?

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Congratulations on completing the Calorie Giving Challenge

The journey of wellness is ongoing, and each step, no matter how small, is a victory to be celebrated. Keep pushing forward, embracing each day as an opportunity to live your best life.