

# THE SUN CHRONICLE

Attleboro-North Attleboro, Mass.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2015

\$2.50 newsstand

## Weighing the options

As 2015 begins, look for new foods, diets to mix with the old

BY EMILY O'DONNELL  
SUN CHRONICLE STAFF

At the dawn of every new year, there's always a handful of nutritional saviors that emerge to help us lose weight and live healthier lives. This year, it seems, will likely be a mix of new and old when it comes to diets.

First, the new: bone broth and hybrid vegetables.

The trend started in New York City where the broth, made from animal bones boiled down to a collagen-rich liquid, is the newest craze. It supposedly offers a number of health benefits such as stronger hair, nails and skin.

New hybrid cruciferous vegetables will also be big in 2015. Look for kalettes (a hybrid of Brussels sprouts and kale), broccoflower (broccoli and cauliflower) and rainbow carrots — purple, red and yellow-colored carrots containing extra beta carotene — to hit the shelves soon.

What's not new: Fad diets.

As in years past, new diet trends in many forms will remain king, despite the best efforts of dietitians.

"I don't recommend fad diets," said Kathy Blackledge, the nutrition clinical coordinator at Sturdy Memorial Hospital in Attleboro.

Blackledge said trendy diet programs "come and go," and they aren't a way to maintain a healthy lifestyle in the long-term.

"The only benefit to these types of diets is if people use them in the short term to think about the entire process — whole foods, portion sizes, exercise — and come up with a real plan," she said.

Blackledge weighed in on the most popular diets of 2014, which will likely be just as big in 2015, beginning with the paleo diet.

The diet, consisting of mostly of animal protein and vegetables, advises participants to emulate what hunters and gatherers ate in the Paleolithic era by avoiding foods that would have been unavailable to cavemen.

Proponents claim that the human body today remains best adapted to the foods available to our prehistoric ancestors, and that our bodies haven't adjusted to modern diets resulting from more recent industrial and agricultural developments.

Paleo proponents maintain that humans aren't able to properly metabolize staples of the types of foods we eat today, such as grains, legumes, dairy, processed foods and refined sugar, so cutting these out leads to weight loss and a generally healthier lifestyle. Dieters are encouraged to focus on protein from meat and seafood, and fiber from non-starchy vegetables and fruit.

"I like this diet because it encourages fruits and vegetables, as well as a focus on cutting out sodium and sugary foods. It's good because it readjusts the palette toward whole foods," Blackledge said.

"But there really isn't a basis for removing whole grains, legumes and dairy. Grains and legumes are high in fiber, which helps us feel full. We're actually trying to get people to eat *more* legumes," she said.

In addition, Blackledge said dairy is a proven aid to weight reduction and the meat protein the paleo diet recommends "exceeds the typical intake the body needs," she said.

Another fad diet, detox programs such as juice cleanses, claim to remove toxins from the body. Proponents say toxins from processed, sugary foods and alcohol build up in the body, causing weight gain and a number of other health problems.

Advocates say a multi-day liquid cleanse rids the bodies of these toxins and boosts metabolism. While not a sustainable long-term diet option, detoxers claim a cleanse is a good way to ease into eating healthier.

However, Blackledge says the body naturally rids itself of toxins through the liver and kidneys, as well as the digestive and immune systems, so a "detoxification" isn't necessary. In fact, she said detox diets can be dangerous.

"Detox diets can lead to nausea, low blood sugar, dizziness, fatigue and dehydration because the 'weight loss' people on these diets experience is actually fluid loss," she said. "You wouldn't even be able to think because your body isn't getting the nutrients it needs."

Blackledge added that many of the supplements associated with these diets haven't been studied and aren't regulated.

A better alternative to trendy diets, she said, is to be more aware of the calories and other nutritional value of the foods you eat, gradually over time. There's no quick solution to a healthy diet to be maintained over a lifetime, she said.

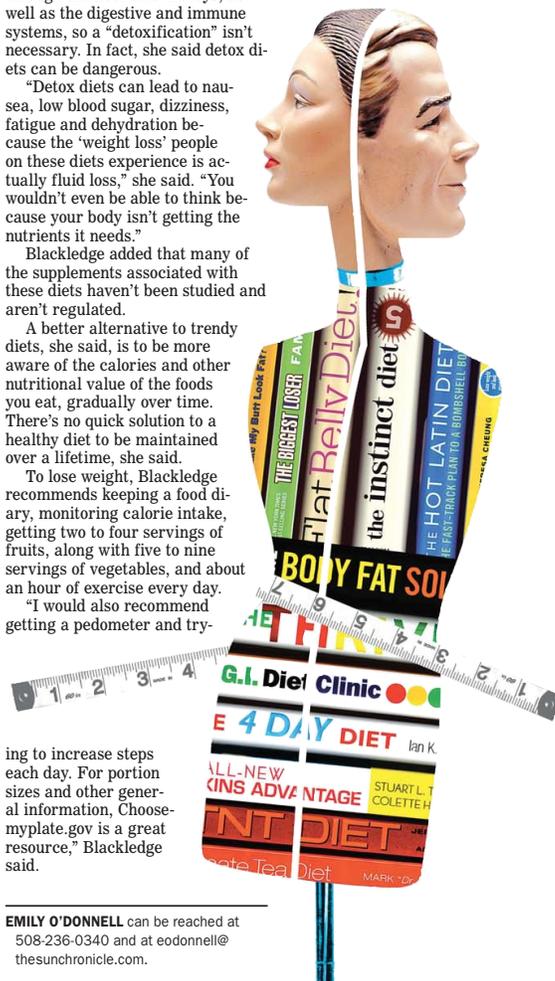
To lose weight, Blackledge recommends keeping a food diary, monitoring calorie intake, getting two to four servings of fruits, along with five to nine servings of vegetables, and about an hour of exercise every day.

"I would also recommend getting a pedometer and try-

ing to increase steps each day. For portion sizes and other general information, ChooseMyPlate.gov is a great resource," Blackledge said.

**'I don't recommend fad diets ... The only benefit to these types of diets is if people use them in the short term to think about the entire process — whole foods, portion sizes, exercise — and come up with a real plan.'**

Kathy Blackledge, nutrition clinical coordinator at Sturdy Memorial Hospital



EMILY O'DONNELL can be reached at 508-236-0340 and at eodonnell@thesunchronicle.com.