



THE CHECKUP: SOUP

Sip off some pounds. A Penn State study found that eating soup can help you cut calories. Volunteers who ate soup before a pasta lunch reduced their total-meal calorie intake by an average of 20 percent. Go for the broth-based vegetable soups.



FOOD FACTOR: FLAX

Flax is one the best sources of alpha-linoleic acid (ALA), a healthy fat that improves the workings of the cerebral cortex, the area of the brain that processes sensory information. To meet your quota, sprinkle it on salads or mix it in a smoothie.

NEWS FLASH: SLEEP BENEFIT

One more reason for getting a good night's sleep: Sleeping an extra hour a night may help control coronary artery calcification, a major risk factor for heart disease. The effect, reported in December's *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, was so strong that the researchers concluded that one extra hour of sleep was the equivalent of lowering systolic blood pressure to a normal 120 from 136.

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Fight poor circulation in several ways

If blood doesn't move well through your veins and arteries, your tissues and organs aren't getting enough oxygen and nutrients. Here are tips for avoiding heart disease and other major health problems that can result:

Be aware of trouble. Symptoms of poor circulation include tingling in the feet and hands, cold fingers and toes, bluish-tinted skin and slow-healing wounds. If you notice those problems, talk to your doctor.

Keep moving. Aim to exercise 30 minutes a day. If you spend a lot of time sitting, stand up or do some simple movements at least once an hour — for example, rotating your arms in small circles, tapping your knees and thighs with a fist or doing a few jumping jacks.

Drink smart. Water improves circulation; try it warm or at room temperature rather than iced. Alcohol, sodas and other sugary drinks can have the opposite effect.

Eat right. Limit sugar, salt and unhealthy fats such as full-fat dairy

products, coconut oils and processed baked goods. Load up on fruits, vegetables and whole grains and eat moderate amounts of healthy fats found in fish, olive oil, avocado, nuts and sesame seeds.

Don't smoke. Nicotine use is a leading cause of circulation problems.

Put your feet up. Regularly prop up your legs for short periods of time.

Take a warm bath. Soaking your body, particularly your feet, in warm water can boost blood flow.

Ask about supplements. Talk to your doctor about options such as B-complex vitamins, vitamin C, calcium, magnesium, omega 3 fish oil or herbal products.

Lower stress. Over time, mental anxiety can lead to circulatory problems. Find an enjoyable hobby, get enough sleep, exercise regularly and learn relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and yoga stretches.

— MCT NEWS SERVICE



No problem, doc: Putting your feet up and taking a warm bath are two ways to help boost blood flow. *Jupiterimages*

SAN DIEGO ALIVE

Demonstrate your resolve to keep those resolutions

A goal on nearly everyone's resolution list usually has something to do with food; eating less of it, or making a lifestyle change that cuts out a major food group like doughnuts. How is it then, that after making a 365-day commitment to ourselves, many of us don't get past the first week?

Health educator and lecturer Deana Latson says that as the temptation grows and people fall back into a negative habit, we tend to forget why we set those goals in the first place. She recommends first writing those goals down, then putting them all around the house for at least the first month. Be specific, she says, and make those stated goals into affirmations. Instead of "I want to lose weight," for instance, try writing, "I am a size 8" or "I always



Deana Latson says rearranging your refrigerator can help you stick to a diet. *Peggy Peattie / Union-Tribune*

use sunscreen." By way of illustrating a way to "foolproof" your refrigerator, Latson takes San Diego Alive on a tour of the snacks, condiments and staples in her own refrigerator.



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