

Healthy LIFE

Prescribed reading for good health and well-being

No crisis for takeaways

What would you like with your economic melt-down? Good food, nutritionist hopes

By JANINE HILL

WHEN the going gets tough, the tough get hungry, apparently. Companies are in credit crisis, profits are down, jobs are being lost, yet the takeaway food business is doing well. Very well, it seems.

In the last two months, McDonald's has recorded record sales and KFC has announced it will pour millions into expanding its outlets.

Time will tell if our downsized economies lead to supersized waistlines, but the current fast-food fad is certainly a source of frustration for Sunshine Coast dietician Bridget-Jane Thompson, of New Leaf Nutrition.

"I'm really, really disappointed that people feel they have to resort to these types of foods," she said.

"People know what they need to be eating but they fail to heed that message."

So why are we less likely to do what we know is good for us when times are tough?

If you follow Bridget-Jane's theories, we're suffering from information overload.

Most of it is depressing, and we're so busy struggling to cope with it all, our resolve is weakened to the point where we choose easy options.

In the case of food, that tends to be products laden with fat and sugar.

For the sake of having a more positive outlook on life, Bridget-Jane herself has given up watching the news on television.

"Look what's in the news at the moment. It's all doom and gloom. It's quite hard. I prefer not to focus

on the news," she said.

"In terms of the economic crisis, it's not something that I notice because it's not something I focus on. I try to look at the opportunities that are out there, and there are opportunities out there."

Bridget-Jane said much of her work was not about teaching people what to eat, because they already knew, but about how to deal with life's stresses without choosing bad food.

"The type of work to do with my clients is about where their head is at, because that dictates where their body is," she said.

"I always say to my clients that no matter what life throws up at you, you have the power to choose how you respond."

As an example, Bridget-Jane suggested that someone who had had their work hours cut back might choose to look at the positive aspects of working fewer hours. She said that could mean spending more time with their children, doing things that made them happy, or reassessing what was really necessary in their life, rather than being a party to unfulfilling consumerism.

And she said that a tight household budget did not mean having to cut back on fresh fruit, vegetables and meat.

One of her favourite healthy and economical meals requires no more than a tin of salmon, a bag of brown rice and vegetables.

She said that rather than buy a week's worth of food at once, shoppers could often get better prices by keeping an eye on their local fruit and vegetable shop's specials of the day. "Buy what's in season. Buy what's on special on the day," Bridget-Jane said.



TAKE AWAY THE EASY OPTION: Fast food is not the answer to coping with the current economic crisis.

Not a diet, but a lifestyle change

JIM Hughes' lifestyle started to catch up with him last July.

Jim, whose work as a project manager requires international travel, returned from Mozambique last year feeling less than average and visited his doctor, who ordered a blood test for malaria.

Along the way, he tested Jim's blood pressure, which was high, and suggested that his patient try and lose 10 kilograms in the next three months.

By Jim's own admission, his eating habits were not good, and what he ate was washed down with more alcohol than advisable.

After advice from dietician



Cheryl and Jim Hughes.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

Bridget-Jane Thompson, he decided to change his ways.

He cut down on red meat,

limited alcohol to 100ml a day (no, he could not "bank" it for a few days to have a decent drink), and the chocolate freak restricted his intake to two pieces once a week.

Combined with some walking and cycling, the dietary changes have seen Jim's 80kg frame slim down to 67kg and Cheryl, who went along for the ride, has also dropped 4-5kg.

Jim said that while making the changes was initially difficult, "now I find it easy".

"I'm feeling great. I'm probably back to the weight I was 17 or 18 years ago and I feel great," he said.

"It's not really a diet. It's more a lifestyle change."

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