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## Calories - Are They Important?

Well, the answer is yes and no.

I have never encouraged anyone to count calories, my firm view is that if you're eating healthily you can't really go over board with much, and even if you did, I don't recall meeting anyone who has got fat by eating healthy food. The best first step is always to clear the junk out of your diet, your intake will regulate itself (just go with it, eat if you're hungry, don't if you're not - easier said than done sometimes) and your body will find the right balance; I don't think there's any real need to monitor exactly what you put in, especially if you're starting from a less-than-perfect starting point, as most of us are.



Likewise, if you eat a poor and junky diet, it doesn't really matter whether you eat too few or too many calories, you'll still get fat and unhealthy - our bodies respond to what we put in them by storing or burning body fat as well as by changing our hormones and gut bacteria for better or worse.

I feel calorie counting can lead to poor choices too; there are almost always less calories in a "healthy" ready meal than there are in a proper home made meal - yet, the homemade option will always be better for us, regardless of calories. This brings us back to the junk food diet idea, just because there are less calories it doesn't make something healthier - 100 calories of sweets are not the same as 100 calories of vegetables, they might be giving you the same energy, but our bodies respond to them in totally different ways, and perhaps its the knock on effect of what we put in rather than how much which determines the results we get.

All this said though, calories do start to matter at a certain point, usually once you're eating really well and often when you're at that \*nearly there\* point you need to readdress how many calories (and how many are coming from fat, protein and carbohydrates) is going in. Once you've cut the junk from your diet and are eating well, you might have found yourself stumped as to why the weight isn't falling off like you hoped. Just consider whether you might have upgraded your diet to more nutrient and energy dense foods but not reduced the quantity of what you're eating. Perhaps you've added in the latest health food crazes on top of your usual diet just because you heard it was good for you and not because you'd been feeling hungry or were planning to increase your activity levels - those extra calories still count. Lovely raw chocolate, cacao nibs, chia seeds, kefir, kombucha, coconut oil - they're all great for you, but if you don't need the extra energy, they're not going to help your weight loss cause.

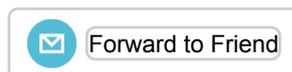
Now, I don't honestly believe you can put weight ON by eating lots of these things (well, perhaps if you went crazy you could), but you can absolutely put a halt on your weight loss efforts by eating too much nutrient / energy dense healthy food.

Take a step back every now and then and review what and how much you're eating - if you want to improve your gut health, for example, add in those fabulous fermented foods, but instead of having them as well as, consider whether you should use them in place of. Our needs, wants and goals change all the time - just make sure you tweak your diet accordingly.

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Until next time, enjoy staying healthy!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Heather". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a red line.

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