CRAVING and INNER HUNGER

NORTH CYPRESS
Internal Medicine and Wellness
Live healthy, live well.

What are Calories?

Calories are **ENERGY** that fuel our bodies; much like gasoline fuels our cars. Without sufficient calories our heart would not beat, our lungs would not function, and our brain would not work. We get calories from all of the food and beverages that we consume.

What are Nutrients?

The foods we eat have different nutrients such as MACRONUTRIENTS and MICRONUTRIENTS. Macronutrients are carbohydrates, protein and fat and they deliver the important energy source = calories to fuel our system. Micronutrients are vitamins and minerals that make sure that our body functions on all levels and we feel our best. A nutrient deficiency can cause several health issues and diseases like lack of concentration, headache, weight gain or diabetes, heart diseases etc.

So what is the difference, really?

Over the past years we learned from many resources that we need to watch our calorie intake. We should not eat too much as we may gain weight or too little to prevent illness. Calories therefore have a strong meaning in the society while the nutrients are actually the foundation of staying healthy or getting sick. Everything we eat or drink has an effect on our body. Many foods have calories but do not contain many nutrients to help our body process it, stay healthy or even to lose weight. It is important to choose foods that provide you a great amount of healthy nutrients while in the range of your caloric intake.

Empty Calories?

When food contains calories without a nutritional benefit we talk about "empty calories". These calories have limited benefit to our body or are even harmful to our health. Unfortunately, today's average American Diet contains a lot of empty calories and our body stores it as fat. More than that, foods with empty calories may cause diseases like obesity, diabetes, inflammation and many more.

So what to do?

While it is a great idea to check the calorie amount on foods with labels, it is even better to check the ingredient list. Foods with "0 Calories" or "low calorie" products may sound appealing but do they really give you the nutrients to stay healthy? It is often better to eat a 400kcal home cooked dinner filled with delicious nutrients than a 300kcal "lean" frozen dinner. Choosing fresh produce is most often the better choice. Remember, while calories tell you how much energy there is in the produce for your body, it won't tell you if these calories come from nutrients that will help your body to stay healthy, lean, fit and focused!

Foods with Empty Calories

- ✓ Cakes, cookies, pastries, and donuts (contain both solid fat and added sugars)
- ✓ Sodas, energy drinks, sports drinks, and fruit drinks (contain added sugars)
- ✓ Cheese (contains solid fat)
- ✓ Pizza (contains solid fat)
- ✓ Ice cream (contains both solid fat and added sugars)
- ✓ Sausages, hot dogs, bacon, and ribs (solid fats)
- ✓ Breads and Pasta

Food with lots of Nutrients

- ✓ Vegetables & Fruits
- ✓ Ancient Grains like Quinoa, Farro, Amaranth, Kamut…
- ✓ High Quality Meat
- ✓ Old Fashioned Oats or Steel Cut Oats