JOEL FUHRMAN, MD

A healthy New Year

The holiday season is a joyous time when we celebrate with our family and friends. However, the festivities often present us with tough choices - tempting, unhealthy foods are everywhere.

It has become accepted in our culture to use the holiday season as an excuse for a six-week binge on dangerous foods loaded with sugar, fat, and salt.

Maybe overindulging while celebrating the holidays has left you feeling unhealthy and regretful in the past. When you are not in good health, it exacerbates every other problem in your life and contributes to emotional unrest.

The New Year is the time to make changes. If you are serious about caring properly for your body — the only body you will ever have — you'll need to make the commitment to stay on the road to wellness and longevity.

No excuses.

Only you are in charge of your future health.

The holiday eating frenzy causes more than a few extra pounds. Junk food, including the traditional, disease-promoting foods served at the holidays, may produce momentary pleasure, but the results continue on to compromise your health for a long time to come.

As a first step, remember the acronym G-BOMBS: Greens, Beans, Onions, Mushrooms, Berries, and Seeds. These are the most health-promoting foods in existence; build your diet around them. Watch out for addictive, disease-promoting foods: white flour, sugars, artificial sweeteners, oils and processed meats. These foods are not only disease-causing, but also addictive.

Here are some strategies for staying on track all year round:

• Always keep your kitchen stocked with fresh and frozen produce.

• Keep disease-causing foods out of your home to avoid temptation.

• Budget time: plan out when you will shop for groceries, cook, exercise, relax and spend time with friends and family.

• Bring healthy dishes to share when you attend gatherings.

• Cook warming vegetable bean soups in large batches, and store leftovers in the refrigerator so you can quickly heat some up for lunch or dinner later in the week.

• Stay focused on your health — eating right is self-care. Do not allow the ubiquitous unhealthy foods around you to derail you from your health goals.

• Find a healthy living buddy. Commit together to your food and exercise goals. Getting support from a friend will firm up your commitment to yourself.

• Don't give in to "food bullies." Friends, family or co-workers will inevitably push unhealthy foods on you; remain confident in your pursuit of excellent health and decline unhealthy foods in a kind and loving manner. Not only will you be pleased with your food choices, you will give the bullies a chance to learn from your example.

Fast forward to next year's holiday season: you will effortlessly make the best choices; the ones that will allow you to achieve overall health and quality of life.

You'll be celebrating your health instead of simply indulging in the "traditional" destructive foods. As you eat for optimal health and vitality, you'll be able to more fully enjoy the special times with family and friends.

You will flourish and it will be the most enjoyable holiday season you've ever had.

There will be no need to "start over" next Jan. 1.

You will already be committed to your health, and feel pleased with yourself for maintaining your healthy habits over the holidays.

Dr. Fuhrman is a board certified family physician specializing in lifestyle and nutritional medicine.

Concert

from 1A

"Denise's repertoire is so large," Kaplan said. "I did not know there were words to 'Black Orpheus.' Judi stands out because she is an alto, a rare treat to your ear because she has a lower register voice, very velvety."

According to Kaplan, MTG will emphasize jazz standards like Dave Brubeck's "Take Five," "How High the Moon," "Bye Bye Blackbird," "Dolphin Dance," "Night and Day," "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Georgia" and other popular favorites.

MTG was formed in 2014 when Kaplan, a percussionist, convinced brass instrumentalist Ron Green, upright bass player Michael Anderson and pianist Gus Russell to form a jazz quartet. Kaplan and Green live in Florence and Anderson and Russell live in Eugene.

"I called these guys and said, 'Would you be interested in putting something together for a straight ahead jazz group?'" Kaplan said. "We have an opportunity with the new owner of the theater here in Florence."

City Lights Cinemas owner Michael Falter explained how the group's name came about.

"They were practicing on the floor and I said how much I loved Miles Davis, one of my heroes," Falter said. "And I kind of like the idea of miles to go. In Florence, everybody here has a lot of years left, so there are miles to go, and the Miles Davis connection.

"I would never have mentioned the name if these guys hadn't been amazing. I would never associate Miles' name with amateurs," he added.

MTG performed for the first time December 2014 at City Lights Cinemas.

Tickets for the Jan. 7 performance are $10 for members, $12.50 for non-members and $5 for any student with student identification.

The concert is a joint production of City Lights Cinemas and It's About Time Productions.

Falter said Box Lunch will offer take-out dinners, so people can eat inside the theater while enjoying the performance. Doors open at 6 p.m., and the performance is from 6:30 to 9 p.m., with an intermission.

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