How to help your family and friends understand your healthy lifestyle changes

Explain what you are doing and why

- As you begin your nutrition and lifestyle changes, you may receive questions or even criticism from family and friends. Sometimes all that is needed to gain their support is to have an honest talk and explain why you’re making these changes.
- Ask for support. Be positive about your desire to change and let your friends/family know that encouraging words help you a lot.
- Tell them the positives you are experiencing. “I am avoiding ____ because it makes me feel better, I have more energy, my digestion is better, and I no longer struggle with difficult symptoms.”
- If friends and family are interested, perhaps provide them with readings/resources that you’ve been given by your nutritionist or healthcare provider to help them understand even more. They may want to join you in your health quest!

Nutrition approaches to wellness is “The Road Less Traveled”

- By choosing to approach your health and wellness with food/nutrition, you are using “Food as Medicine” and not a pill to control your symptoms. Be realistic and know that this takes time. These changes will not happen overnight, so be patient and work closely with your nutritionist to continue to steadily heal and achieve your best health and self!

Make light of it

- If you feel there is unwanted attention on you, make light of the situation. If someone asks, “Why are you not eating ____?” Casually respond with, “Oh, I’m making some nutrition changes for my health.” Then ask a question about them.
- Tell your friends and family that you have a boot-camp/dictator nutritionist who demands you make these changes, and you have no other choice. She’s/He’s scary! © We’re always happy to be the scapegoat.

Be confident

- These health changes are ultimately for YOU! Friends and family may give you hard time or pressure you to stray from your plan. Regardless, you are the one who will see and feel benefits so it’s important to remind yourself that you’re doing it for you! If necessary, talk to them about it. They may not even realize what they are doing.

Plan ahead

- For social events: bring a dish you can safely eat, eat before you go, or pack a small snack to take with you.
- Suggest a restaurant you trust will have options for you.
- Gain the servers support by smiling and saying, “I promise I’ll tip, can I get your help modifying my meal to fit my current health needs?” Convey the message that you want to partner with them to develop your meal as opposed to telling them what you need. Ask their opinion. Be positive and cooperative to make it an enjoyable experience for everyone. (If you’re unsure whether they take your request seriously, tell them you have a food allergy, which could result in a medical emergency if exposed to the eliminated food).

My loved ones don’t want to eat what I need to eat

- Explain to them that these changes are about using food to heal your body. Compromise by making meals that they can substitute in items they prefer versus casseroles or mixed dishes.
- If you must, make special meals for you and freeze the rest for future meals while others eat their meal of choice.
- Over time, your friends/family may begin to notice the positive impact a healthy diet by seeing the physical, mental, and emotional changes in you and be more open to trying new foods.