In this day and age when processed and fast-foods seem to be the norm, take a moment to stop, smell the broccoli, and ask yourself, “Am I living the healthiest life I can live? Do I eat balanced meals that include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products? Have I introduced lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts into my diet?”

And the biggie … “Do I exercise on a regular basis and get plenty of sleep?” If you answered yes to those questions, our kudos to you. If you answered no to those questions, that’s okay. You always have options when it come to make healthy changes within your life.

Healthy Tips
~ Let your doctor know you want to make positive changes in your eating and physical activity habits. Your doctor may have specific advice for you regarding any medical condition you may have.

~ Studies show that people do better when they keep track of their progress. Start a journal so you can track the foods and drinks you consume daily. Also, track your physical activity.

~ Be realistic. Any type of change takes time. The road to success is paved with small changes that can lead to long-lasting results.

Food Choices
Fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat. They add flavor and variety to your diet. They also contain fiber, vitamins and minerals.

Baking, broiling and roasting are the healthiest ways to prepare meat. Lean cuts can be pan-broiled or stir-fried.

Dry beans, peas and lentils offer protein and fiber without the cholesterol and fat of meats. Occasionally, try substituting beans for meat in a favorite recipe, such as lasagna or chili.

Choose non-fat or low-fat dairy products. Skim sherbet is a great alternative to ice cream.

For additional resources, contact your Wellnet Office.

Enjoy the fruits of your endeavors.
“Since January I started cutting all processed foods out of my diet. I eat mainly lean meats, fish, veggies, fruits, and nuts,” said Krisoula Sfetsas, cash poster II, Finance, Johns Hopkins Home Care Group. “I try to focus on eating good fats like olive oil, avocados and walnuts. I try to eat a lot of green leafy veggies like spinach and collards, because they provide many vitamins, minerals and nutrients. I avoid breads, sugars, pastas and sweets. I also keep a big water bottle at my desk and drink water all day.

“I’ve stuck to my new lifestyle of eating well. I love the results. Not only am I physically looking and feeling better, I have improved on my biometric screening.

“I took on the challenge of the Biggest Loser at work, and took home the overall Biggest Loser prize, which left me feeling proud and accomplished.

“I have already begun to spread advice to my colleagues. I just started a program called Slim for Summer at work for co-workers which includes bi-weekly weigh-ins, walking groups, healthy pot- tucks, exercise sessions, and recipe sharing. I’m excited to see how it goes!”

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“I have been eating a plant-based diet for close to two decades. I feel that it gives me a lot of energy, and I’ve never had to worry about my weight, even though I generally eat a small dessert twice a day,” said Sharon Praissman, nurse practitioner, Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center.

“I’m trying to cut back on my sweets; it’s not going so well. I recently gave up coffee and I do find that I’m more alert in the morning and less fatigued in the afternoon.

“The last several years I’ve been growing a lot of my own food. I frequent area farmers markets and the Community Garden I started on Bayview’s campus in 2009. I love watching the patients and staff members interact in the garden. It is thrilling to see someone’s reaction to a baby eggplant growing.

“I joined One Straw Farm Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) about four years ago and love being part of it. They allow us to pick out what we want instead of just handing us a box. It is economical and convenient and the people are super nice.”

“I make a conscious effort daily to eat more fruits and vegetables and to eliminate red meat from my diet,” said Ken Kradel, director, Operations Support, Johns Hopkins HealthCare. “I also signed up with an EHP health coach for six months to help me reach my weight loss goals and to reduce my cholesterol levels.

“I’ve greatly reduced the saturated fat intake in my diet and have started adding olive oil to salads and to whole wheat pastas instead of sauce. The result of that has been weight loss and I have more energy.”

“I also subscribe to newsletters such as Vital Choice, which has information about foods and choices you can make regarding your diet. I also read all labels before I make a purchase.

“When making a healthy lifestyle change, start small with a gradual change. Substitute a piece of fruit or vegetable for a cookie. The key is portion size. Anything larger than the palm of your hand is too much.”

“I cook the majority of my meals using seasonal produce and very little meat,” said Mia Cellucci, project coordinator, Center for a Livable Future, Johns Hopkins University.

“These days my focus is on the beautiful overlaps between food and community, from seed to table. Whenever possible, I grow, cook and eat with people I love. When food is about beauty, community and pleasure, health falls into place, as well as quality of life.

“The best resources I’ve found are the farmers in my region. My housemates and I participate in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) by paying farmers at the beginning of the growing season for a share of what they produce. Doing so helps the farmers remain in business.

“I also grow a small portion of the food I eat, both in my backyard container garden and at the Blue Jay’s Perch, the first-ever Johns Hopkins community garden.”