



From Chef Linda

## **What you should know about Nutrient Density and Calorie Density**

**This is not about counting calories but more about knowing that unrefined, minimally processed, wholefoods will generally have a lower calorie density than processed foods, while suppling your body with the nutrients it needs.**

### **What is calorie density?**

It is a measure of many calories in a food, for a given weight or portion of that food.

Calorie Density- It is important to understand that the food choices you make will determine how much nutrition you get out of a certain number of calories. Be aware that processed and high fat foods usually contain many calories but not very much in beneficial nutrients.

The problem with processed food is that they are concentrated due to the reduction in water. Also, the process used to make them shelf stable may have reduced or eliminated the fiber, vitamins, and phytonutrients from the food.

There are natural, healthy foods that are calorie dense such as nuts, seeds, nut butters, dried fruit, avocados, and coconut, so be aware of your portion size when consuming them.

### **What is nutrient density?**

It is a measure of the beneficial nutrients (both macro and micro) such as carbs, fat, protein, fiber, water, vitamins, and minerals in a food, for a given weight or portion of that food.

Nutrient Density- Many of the foods containing the most beneficial nutrients also may contain the least number of calories. Think about all types of leafy greens, cucumbers, tomatoes, zucchini, celery, and carrots for example.

Satiety- a feeling of being full and satisfied, the opposite of hungry.

It is important to understand that you can consume 100 calories of a nutrient dense food such as broccoli, which comes out to be about 12 ounces or a plate full, or you can consume 1 ounce of cheddar cheese for the same 100 calories.

Which one will provide a more beneficial mixture of micro and macronutrients (carbs, fat, protein, fiber, water, vitamins, and minerals) and which one will provide mostly fat?

This is a good example of how the large amount of fiber and water in the broccoli will help to fill you up, while the one to two bites of cheese will leave you wanting more. When selecting foods for your plate think less about counting calories and more about selecting unprocessed, healthy, nutritious foods.