

WEDNESDAY 04.27.16

table

A WELLNESS PRIMER

Morristown author Julie Cohen presents simple tips for healthier eating, weight loss

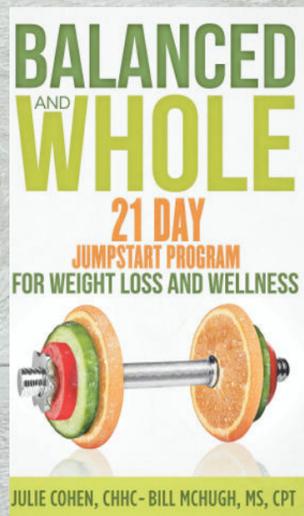
SUSAN BLOOM CORRESPONDENT

Though she'd been an active runner and a mostly healthy eater all her life, Julie Cohen's official foray into the world of healthy foods came when she had her first child over 20 years ago. ♦ According to the 52-year-old Staten Island native and current Morristown resident, "having children started me on a journey to determine what good health truly meant to me because I wanted to feed my kids well." ♦ As she began learning as much as she could about healthy foods and ultimately became a certified holistic health counselor, "I was surprised by the disconnect out there in terms of what people actually knew about sound nutrition," Cohen said. "It made me angry to see many of the unhealthy products being marketed to kids and families and to see people struggling to understand the difference between whole foods and processed foods." ♦ In an effort to help bridge this disparity, Cohen embarked on a mission to not only share insights on healthy choices and ingredients, but to help people put these into practice for themselves. ♦ "People want to be healthy, but are often busy or don't know how," said Cohen, who's also certified in Cooking Technique from the Natural Gourmet Institute in New York City. "I want to demonstrate cooking approaches but also help people make this happen for themselves." ♦ Working with co-author and fitness expert Bill McHugh to publish *Balanced and Whole: A 21 Day Jumpstart Program for Weight Loss and Wellness* in September 2015, "we recognized the

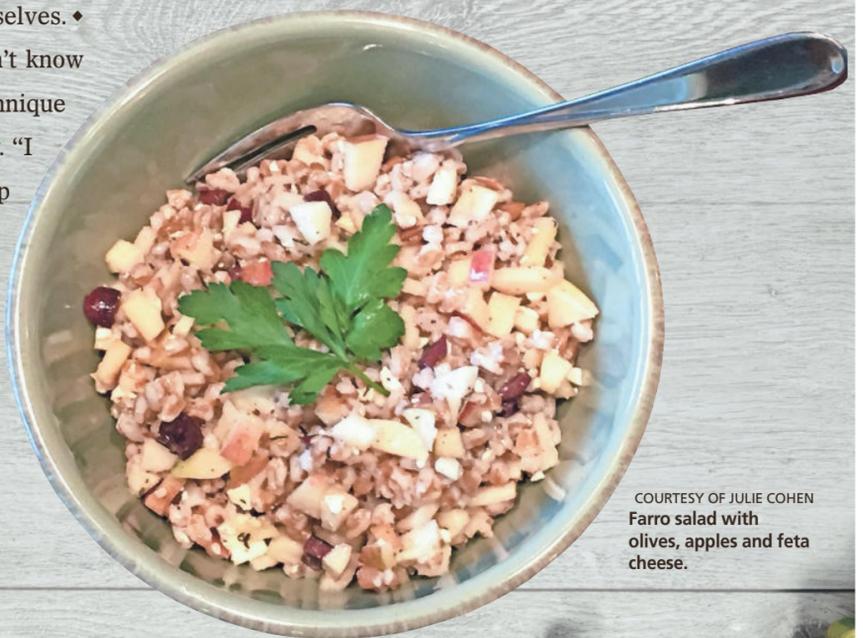
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Above: Chicken lettuce wraps make a delicious, nutritious and easy-to-prepare meal.
COURTESY OF JULIE COHEN



At left, *Balanced and Whole*, an easy-to-follow primer for achieving a healthier lifestyle, was published in September 2015.
COURTESY OF JULIE COHEN



COURTESY OF JULIE COHEN
Farro salad with olives, apples and feta cheese.

FOOD BASKET

Pancakes, pierogies and a food truck 'frenzy' this weekend

SARAH GRIESEMER AND STAFF REPORTS

Wharton Boy Scout Troop 67 will hold a **Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser** 8:30 a.m. to noon Saturday at the Wharton United Community Church at St. John's located at 20 Church St. in the borough.

The breakfast will include pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs, fruit salad, orange or apple juice and coffee or tea.

Cost is \$10 per adult, \$8 for seniors, and \$6 for children 10 years and younger.

This is the troop's biggest fundraiser for the year, which helps the scouts offset the cost of summer camp.

For more information or to purchase tickets, contact Donna at 973-796-7140 or 862-397-3353.

The **Knights of Columbus Council 5410 of Flanders** will host its **Pre-Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast** 7:30 a.m. to noon Saturday. The all-you-can-eat breakfast will include pancakes, French toast, eggs, sausage, cupcakes, doughnuts, coffee, tea and orange juice.

The cost is a donation of \$6.50 per adult, \$4 per child ages 6 to 12, and free for children 5 and younger.

The Knights of Columbus is at 3 Schmitt Lane in Old Flanders. For more information, call 973-610-1308.

'All-You-Can-Eat Pierogi' dinner in Mount Arlington

Eleventh Hour Rescue will host a Special All-You-Can-Eat Pierogi Dinner on Saturday at the Lake Hopatcong Elks Lodge, located at 201 Howard Boulevard in Mount Arlington. Seatings are 5:30 and 7 p.m. Take out is also available.

A tricky tray and raffles will also be held. Beer, wine, soft drinks and baked goods will be available for purchase.

Online tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for children ages 12 and under. At the door, \$20 for adults, \$15 for children ages 12 and under.

All proceeds benefit Eleventh Hour Rescue's homeless animals in their care.

Tickets or more information are available at www.ehrdogs.org.

Food Truck Frenzy

Skylands Stadium usually is home to athletes and en-

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TANYA BREEN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A sweet corn tamale from Empanada Guy, one of many food trucks participating in Skylands Stadium's Food Truck Frenzy on Saturday.

table

Wellness

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need for a basic and easy-

to-follow 'how-to' manual to help people attain lasting weight loss and fitness results," she said. Offering delicious, healthy and easy recipes that involve six ingredients or less and are broken down into categories for 'cookers' (those who can pull all or most of the recipe elements together from scratch) and 'builders' (those who can build upon pre-made basics such as a rotisserie chicken or a packaged salad by adding fresh vegetables or other ingredients), "the book is a primer for eating well and keeping it simple in an accessible way that makes people comfortable," Cohen said.

Cohen shared some of her best tips from the book:

Eat more veggies — Because "vegetables are the most important and also the element that's most lacking in people's diets in today's protein-obsessed society," Cohen said, "people should plan their meal around the vegetables first." She recommends opting for what's fresh and in season, "as these items will be the most economical as well as the most nutritious because they haven't had to travel that far to get to your plate. It's an old philosophy that's well-proven — if we eat in greater harmony with nature and the seasons, the less stressed and healthier both we and the environment will be."

Eat less 'pulverized' grain — "Even whole wheat bread is 'pulverized' and has a different impact on our body, blood sugar and metabolism than whole grains like wheat berries, rice, or quinoa," said Cohen, who also advises eliminating processed food and added sugar (as found in such items as commercial baked goods and flavored yogurt) as much as possible. "People say they feel less bloated when they stop eating all of these things and that they didn't even know they'd been feeling that way until they eliminated them," she said.

Avoid fads — "I don't believe in fad diets," said Cohen, who noted that many people jump from one to another with limited lasting success. From popular approaches like the Paleo Diet to others involving cabbage soup or grapefruits, "all of them have some kernel of truth for different people," she said, "but they're typically very 'black and white' and can often be misinterpreted."

Tune in — "It's about lifestyle changes, listening to your body, and using com-

mon sense," Cohen said. "Tune into what you like and what makes you feel good and don't ignore this feedback loop. Trust yourself, because you know yourself better than anyone, and become a detective." She also recommends the process of food journaling, "which helps draw awareness to what you're eating and why."

Be a smart consumer of organics — "Spend organic food dollars wisely," she said, "investing in organics when you can and when it makes sense. For example, if you have a great source of locally-grown products, then it may not be as vital to opt for organic alternatives. On the other hand, it helps to learn which fruits and vegetables retain the highest pesticide residue, such as strawberries, and to invest in organic varieties of those foods when you can."

Exercise — Cohen said that the combination of healthy eating and exercise is the foundation of a healthier lifestyle overall and will provide the momentum to keep it going. On the exercise front, "we want it to be accessible from a financial perspective," said Cohen, whose co-author, Bill McHugh, prescribes a fun approach to both strength training as well as activities that are good for the cardiovascular system using easy props such as a physio ball and resistance bands. "Walking is also great for everyone and a 5K walk or run is a nice milestone that you can train for and work towards over a long period of time," she said. "Ultimately, we encourage everyone to find some form of exercise they enjoy, and many will benefit from the social aspect and camaraderie of these as well."

Embrace a lifestyle change — While there's certainly no quick fix for anything, "we've developed a great basic how-to manual to help people plan for and manage a more whole foods-based diet as well as move every day," Cohen said. "We hope to raise people's level of awareness about food and exercise and lead them to invest more time and thought into these critical areas because it can make such a huge difference in their lives." Once informed, "we want people to be able to feel good about themselves and their food and lifestyle choices above all else," she said.

Balanced and Whole: A 21 Day Jumpstart Program for Weight Loss and Wellness by Julie Cohen and Bill McHugh is available through Barnes & Noble, Amazon, Just Jersey in Morristown, and other places where books are sold. For more information, visit www.balancedandwhole.com.

Share your healthy eating tips. Email Planning Editor Eva Abreu, ea-breu@gannettnj.com.

RECIPES

Chicken Lettuce Wraps with Peanut Sauce

©2015 Julie Cohen, as published in *Balanced and Whole*

Makes 1 serving

1 cup leftover chicken, diced or in small strips
3 large outer leaves of either iceberg or butter lettuce
3 scallions, white part and one inch of green, thinly sliced
Peanut Sauce:
2 tablespoons creamy (smooth) peanut butter
½ tablespoon shoyu or tamari soy sauce
¼ teaspoon maple syrup
½ heaping teaspoon grated fresh ginger (a roughly 1-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and grated)
1½ tablespoons very warm water
Carefully remove and rinse lettuce leaves. Gently place 1/3 cup of chicken in center of leaf and sprinkle 1/3 of scallions on top. To make peanut sauce, add all ingredients to small jar or shaker bottle and mix thoroughly; if sauce is too thick, add a bit more warm water. Assemble wraps by pouring one tablespoon of peanut sauce over chicken, gently roll leaf, enjoy....and repeat!

Farro Salad

©2015 Julie Cohen, as published in *Balanced and Whole*

Makes 1 serving

¾ cup cooked farro (leftover)
5 pitted Kalamata olives, chopped (or else try a few marinated and chopped sun-dried tomatoes)
½ of an apple, cored (skin on) and chopped
2 tablespoons feta cheese
Dressing:
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
½ teaspoon Zatar (available from Penzeys.com, or else substitute ½ teaspoon of cumin and taste before adding salt)
Freshly ground pepper to taste
Mix farro, chopped olives, apple, and feta cheese in a bowl. Add all dressing ingredients to small jar and shake well. Pour dressing over farro salad, mix well, and taste for seasoning.

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