



**TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE
WITH THE
BIBLE'S WAY TO WEIGHT LOSS**



March 2008

Matthew 6:33:
But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.



Dear Friends,

We are approaching the end of a long, difficult labor of love and are expectantly awaiting the delivery of our new baby *First Place 4 Health* on June 10, 2008. The original First Place program began in March, 1981. The first revision occurred in 1991, when LifeWay became our publisher. The second revision was in 2001, when Gospel Light became our publisher. This third revision is the first total re-write of the program and has taken two years to complete.

First Place

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Carole Lewis National Director

The changes are many, beginning with our new name, First Place 4 Health. As with each change made, we have endeavored to enhance what we have had all along by changing the way we present the materials. We have not changed the basic tenets of the program, which have always been based on Matthew 6:33, *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given you as well.* We have not changed the foundational truths of seeking a lifestyle change by learning how to live a life of balance in all four areas; emotional, spiritual, mental and physical.

During the month of April, we will have three Kick-Off events to preview and teach the basic tenets of the new program. Our First Place 4 Health staff will be present at all of these events. For more information and to register for an event, go to www.firstplace.org and click on Events.

This month I will give you some of the highlights of the new First Place 4 Health.

Emotional

Cindy Schirle, a professional Christian counselor, is featured on a DVD in the Member's Kit. Cindy tells her personal story of healing and gives the keys to emotional healing on the DVD. Cindy has also written extensively in the Member's Guide and has an emotional mapping exercise for member's to go through at home.

A new book *Simple Ideas For Healthy Living* is included in the Member Kit. This book has a section of articles devoted to the emotional area of First Place 4 Health. Each article is inter-active so that the student might be able to personalize.

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Spiritual

Every Bible study will be entirely re-written and re-introduced at the rate of four each year. The only things that will remain the same are the Scripture memory verses and the Scripture memory CD's in the back of each study. The Bible studies are packed with new features I will mention in the mental and physical sections of this article.

Mental

We are very excited to have laminated Scripture Memory cards in the back of each Bible study. This is a long-time "dream come true." and we are grateful that our publisher made the dream a reality for our First Place 4 Health members. These cards can be removed and used in many ways as a Scripture memory tool. The Scripture reference will appear on one side and the actual verse on the reverse side of the card.

Physical

A brand new Live It plan is the big change! Erin DuBroc, our First Place 4 Health Registered Dietitian, spent her entire first year on staff writing the new food plan. Erin will be featured on all the new DVD's included in the Group Starter Kit to be used at Orientation and the first few weeks of meetings. See Erin's article for more exciting details.

Dr. Dick Couey is featured on a new DVD included in each Member Kit. This is also a long-time "dream come true" for our First Place 4 Health program. Dr. Couey has been a friend of First Place and a speaker at First Place events for over 20 years. Now every member will have the benefit of learning from his vast knowledge in their own home.

Each Bible study will include two weeks of meals with the new nutritional information added.

See Vicki Heath's article this month for more exciting details on the new First Place 4 Health exercise component.

In our April E-Newsletter I will answer the questions we are receiving in our office about the new program. We hope to see you at our Kick-Off events in April or at our First Place 4 Health Leadership Summit July 25-26 at Houston's First Baptist Church. Our staff will teach you how to use the new materials at all of these events.

Blessings to you,

Carole Lewis

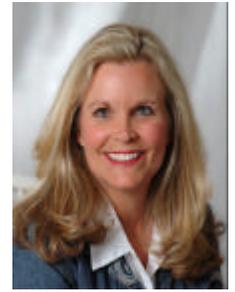
First Place National Director





Leadership Training

What's New in Fitness for First Place 4 Health



Vicki Heath

vicki.heath@firstplace.org

One of the changes coming in First Place 4 Health in the area of exercise is our new philosophy: *Something is better than nothing and more is better than less.* What could be simpler than that! Gone are the days when we thought our exercise didn't "count" if it wasn't performed in thirty minute increments. Studies now show that all activity is cumulative. That means that even something as simple as increasing your daily activity will have health benefits, and the more significant the increase the greater the benefits.

The physical, psychological, emotional, and social benefits associated with physical activity at all age levels are well documented. In spite of all of the proof, statistics from some of the newest studies on exercise adherence indicate that approximately 70 percent of the individuals who start an exercise program drop out within six months. How many times have you started an exercise program just to quit after a few weeks of frustration and soreness? That is not unusual. Most people give up on exercise for the following reasons:

- » Time Restraints
- » Lack of results
- » Injury
- » Boredom

First Place 4 Health Fitness will help you find just the right activity mode that will work for you and fit into your lifestyle. We will help you to *not* be like "most people." Initially, it may take some brainwashing to get you to stop thinking of exercise as punishment for an imperfect body!

First Place 4 Health will help you develop a new way of thinking by:

- » Focusing on the way exercise makes you *feel* when you are finished
- » Focusing on the *results and benefits* of exercise on your health and wellbeing

The new First Place 4 Health will provide tools for you to be successful on your fitness journey regardless of your fitness level. One way is with these two concepts:

Beginning with a Lot to Lose and *The Extra Mile*

Beginning with a Lot to Lose will have suggestions for those of you who are deconditioned, just beginning to exercise, recovering from an injury or have a lot of weight to lose. *The Extra Mile* is for those of you who have been exercising and would like to achieve a higher level of fitness.

First Place 4 Health still recommends a balance of all four components of physical fitness: cardio respiratory, strength and endurance, flexibility and balance, and a healthy BMI, but with a simpler approach.

In the area of cardio respiratory fitness (exercises that strengthen the heart and help burn calories) we are introducing two new programs:

10,000 Steps a Day and the 100 Mile Club.

According to a recent study by the Center for Disease Control, the most popular exercise for individuals wanting to lose weight is walking.

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10,000 Steps a Day is a program designed to get you to increase the steps you take in an average day. Most sedentary Americans move only about 2,000 to 3,000 steps a day. Studies reveal that increasing the number up to 6,000 steps a day can significantly reduce the risk of death from heart disease, and 8,000 to 10,000 steps a day promotes weight loss.

100 Mile Club

If 10,000 steps a days seem overwhelming, you can always choose the *100 Mile Club*. The key to the 100 mile club is to be consistent with your activity and keep track of your activity. Can't walk that mile yet? Don't be discouraged! There are exercises you can do to strengthen your body and burn those extra calories. Just keep moving and keep good records and you will be surprised at how quickly your activity adds up. You will be able to keep track of your activity on your Live-It Tracker or in your Bible Study. The 100-mile chart will be on the back of the front cover. You will be able to convert all activity minutes into miles. Your goal is to strive to reach 100 miles before the last meeting in your current First Place 4 Health group session.

I hear from many of you every day that are turning the corner and becoming more active and actually achieving significant weight loss. The new First Place 4 Health fitness program has been written by me with you in mind to help you do the best you can where you are right now, making every step count on your way to wellness.

Step out in Faith!

Vicki Heath

First Place 4 Health Kick-off Rallies

April 5, 2008

New Hope Baptist Church
Loveland, OH

Contact: Janet Kirkhart

Phone: 513-382-8231

Email: janet1stplace@hotmail.com

Cost: \$25

Registration Required

April 12, 2008

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
New Orleans, LA

Contact: Paulette McDonald

Phone: 985-951-9794

Email: paulettkmcdonald@yahoo.com

Cost: \$25

Registration Required

April 19, 2008

Covenant-Central Presbyterian Church
Williamsport, PA

Contact: Mary Ann Vance

Phone: 570-322-3642

Email: mavance54@verizon.net

Cost: \$25

Registration Required

More information to come about these dates:

Ventura, CA ~ November 2008

Bremerton, WA ~ September 27, 2008

Racine, WI ~ September 27, 2008

Toledo, OH ~ November 15, 2008





Balanced Living – Emotional

Seeds Sown for Good



Bill Heston
bheston@fpchouston.org

...the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Galatians 6:8b-10

“For good” could mean for a positive purpose or it could mean that it will last forever. In this title both things are intended. We can plant seeds that are for eternal benefit. What a great opportunity.

I found an old garden patch in my back yard when we moved in over two years ago. The area was filled with rich mulch and obviously had been worked for several seasons. We planted seedlings our first spring. The plants did terrible, but we assumed that it was because we did not have time to tend to them and they were neglected as we settled into the house. The next year fared no better even with new fertilizer, added soil and more good seeds. The plants refused to produce. This year we are planting grass in the space once cleared for tender vegetables. There is something wrong with the soil and plants will not grow. We wasted time, chemicals and plants, but not again.

We all know that the seed of faith is good. Many of us wonder why we do not produce more for the Kingdom. Could it be the soil in which we are trying to plant, or could it be that we never look for the soil that is ready for the seeds and fail to go to the effort to plant?

The Christian faith that impacts our world is one that is relevant [fertile soil] and one that is purposefully sown. There are many reasons for Christians being non-productive, but perhaps none

greater than feelings of inadequacy. Often that is expressed by not knowing enough of the scripture, or fear that a question may be asked for which there seems to be no answer. But the greatest obstacle that most of us face is a feeling of inadequacy as a Christian.

Feelings of inadequacy negatively impact many aspects of our lives. It is the self-accusation that we cannot share our faith to others because they know our shortcomings and would think we are hypocrites. It ruins friendships by making us too needy or too critical or too aloof. It hampers success in attempts to move ahead with big dreams because it is easier to focus on past mistakes and not on past successes. It derails sincere plans to take care of ourselves and make healthy choices. Instead, we stay with the comfort of not trying.

Where do we get feelings of inadequacy?

- » *Negative messages from our past.* Many times important people in our childhood pass on their own negative, sad and angry feelings to children, who in turn absorb them not even remembering why they were given.
- » *Negative circumstances.* Surroundings are sometimes so unhealthy that it is difficult not to absorb some of their effect. This may be due to dysfunctional family situations, extreme poverty, a crisis-based situation that is not of any one person’s making or many other contributors.
- » *Negative choices.* What we do with what comes our way greatly colors our feelings of self-worth. Bad decisions can limit our future choices when there are painful consequences. There may also be some negative choices that others may never know, but the secret still creates deep hurt and often shame.

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How do we overcome feelings of inadequacy?

- » *Positive healthy relationships.* Finding settings where others demonstrate positive relationships and finding ways to interact with them is a wonderful way to develop positive messages. Places like a Sunday School class or a *First Place* program. Also finding a mentor through a church program like a Stephen Ministry is also a good choice.
- » *Positive Settings.* Getting involved in helping others will often help us gain some new perspectives. It can also allow us to see how our lessons we have learned through our struggles can be an encouragement to others, who are just beginning to deal with their painful issues.
- » *Positive Choices.* The first step is to seek forgiveness for our own bad decisions. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* I John 1:9 Next...find a trustworthy Christian friend or leader who is committed to confidentiality and admit your past mistakes ...*confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5: 16*

We possess the most powerful power to change lives; it is the sowing of faith, faith that has transformed us.

Seeds of faith that can be sown for GOOD!

Dr. Bill Heston

Dr Bill Heston is Associate Pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Houston and is Licensed in Marriage and Family Therapy.

**First Place 4 Health
Leadership Summit 2008
July 25-26, 2008
Houston's First Baptist Church
Houston, Texas**

Cost: \$75
(after July 11th, the cost is \$85)

Join us for an incredible two days of celebrating, networking, brainstorming, idea sharing, praying, training and worship. All First Place 4 Health networking leaders, workshop leaders, active, former and potential leaders are invited to attend. Your registration fee includes all speakers and seminars, lunch and dinner on Friday and lunch on Saturday.

Keynote Speaker:

Becky Turner
National Director, Lifehouse of Houston

Seminar Leaders:

Carole Lewis, First Place 4 Health National Director
Vicki Heath, First Place 4 Health Director of Leadership Development
Erin DuBroc, MPH, LD, RD, First Place 4 Health Dietician
And More!

Seminars:

New First Place 4 Health Food Plan
New First Place 4 Health Fitness Program
What's Hot and What's Not in Nutrition
Leadership
And More!

Schedule:

We will begin on Friday at 9:00 AM and go all day until 8:00 PM. We will start again on Saturday at 9:00 AM and end our programming with lunch at Houston's First Baptist Church at 12:00 PM. All attendees are welcome to caravan to Carole Lewis' bay house for fun and fellowship until sundown*.

*in case of inclement weather, alternate activities are planned.

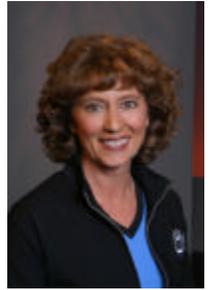
For more information, please go to www.firstplace.org and click on events.





Balanced Living - Physical

Exercise: burn fat, don't store it!



Jeannie Blocher
jeannie@bodyandsoul.org

Many people ask, “Do I really have to exercise in order to lose weight?” Certainly, people have lost a few pounds and not changed their exercise habits, right? The simple answer is that you don’t “have to” exercise, but if you understand the process that happens in your body when you exercise, you will want to! When you add modest exercise to your lifestyle your body responds in powerful ways that God has designed to improve your health, and the result is that your body actually “releases” fat.

One of the most powerful benefits of exercise is improved sensitivity to insulin. In a fit person, up to 90% of calories eaten are burned as fuel in the muscles as insulin does the job of activating muscle cells to receive the glucose. In a less fit person, only 50% or less of calories will be burned as fuel in the muscles. So where does the rest go? It is stored as fat. So you wonder why you can eat less and not lose weight? This is the reason: a decreased sensitivity to insulin (insulin resistance), and a poor blood flow to the muscles. Studies have shown that when we exercise, our body actually changes; it opens the capillary bed to increase blood flow, which allows insulin to do its work of delivering glucose to the muscle cell. That allows us to once again burn calories instead of storing them.

When you start to exercise and reverse insulin resistance, stored fat is released!

- » Muscle tissue begins to take up your glucose more normally (usually 80-90 %) following a meal.
- » Insulin (fat storage hormone) levels are lowered
- » Glucagon (fat burning hormone) levels are increased
- » Healthy balance is created between these two hormones.
- » Bad metabolic changes begin to reverse.
- » Fat begins to release naturally

Be encouraged! Adding modest exercise to your life *will* make a difference! It will help you improve your health at the cellular level and it will give you that boost to *release fat* as you get healthier!





Nutrition Notes

A Taste of something NEW

Erin DuBroc
erin.dubroc@firstplace.org



The staff of First Place is just bursting with excitement these days! We are so excited to soon share with you the First Place 4 Health program – a new and improved version of First Place! A lot has changed since the last revision back in 2001, and in order to provide you with the best program ever for achieving a healthy weight, as well as establishing godly balance in your life, we have been busily researching and writing new materials for this wonderful program that continues to radically change lives after 27 years this month!

In the ever-evolving arena of health and wellness, it is so essential to our credibility and longevity to stay current and fresh. Trust me, you'll be thrilled with the improvements once you see them. And you can do so by keeping in touch through our e-newsletters, our website, and attending either a Kick-off Event (dates and locations listed here: <http://www.firstplace.org/events.html>) or our Leadership Summit July 25-26 (the registration form is here: http://www.firstplace.org/PDF/Flyer_and_Reg_LS2008.pdf). Attending either event will be a sure way to get educated, inspired and plugged in to the new First Place 4 Health program!

We will answer many of your questions at the Kick-offs and Leadership Summit, as well as on our website, in the upcoming months, but for now, allow me to give you a taste of what the new First Place 4 Health food plan will offer you.

A grace-filled way of eating with the primary focus on the “big picture” when it comes to healthy eating – namely, quality and quantity. You will learn how to incorporate your favorite foods into a personalized, colorful, and nutritious food plan. For those who have ever asked, “How do you exchange a doughnut?” you will get a straight-forward answer in the new First Place 4 Health that will transform your cheating mentality into a choosy one. We've included a new DVD segment on a fresh component in our Live It plan, the Nutrition Top 10. In it, you'll see me explain how our list of ten behaviors you can adopt today will greatly assist you in losing weight and keeping it off. In addition, we will no longer be using the exchange program as a way to monitor our food quality and quantity, but rather the household terms of cups, ounces, and teaspoons. The only thing you'll be exchanging is a complicated and often confusing way of eating, for one we know will be much more practical and realistic for you to follow.

A simple and God-honoring way to look at food. Not as “good” or “bad”, rather how frequently it should be consumed in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle – “often,” “occasional,” or “seldom.” All foods can have a place in a healthy diet, but not all should have a *prominent* place (see 1 Corinthians 6:12). When optimum nutrition and walking in freedom with Christ are the main goals, weight loss will naturally follow! In another DVD, you'll take a trip with me to the grocery store and learn about the new and improved Live It plan and how to approach every section of the grocery store.

Because everyone is unique and at different stages in their weight loss journey, we've adopted appropriate calorie *ranges* for weight loss or maintenance by taking into account your age, sex, and activity level. Wherever you are in your weight loss journey or however much you have to lose, we can advise you on how to get started, keep going, or maintain your healthy weight. Personalization is a major component in the new MyPyramid published in 2005, by the United States Department of Agriculture and the





Department of Health and Human Services, and we embrace it as well. Also, we will no longer be breaking your calories down into exchanges of foods, but rather more intuitive serving sizes using cups, ounces, and teaspoons as quantifiers. We're hopeful that this new method of monitoring the quality of your food, as well as the quantity, will be much less confusing and less distracting from the big picture of eating well in appropriate amounts.

Tried and true methods for how to make the transition to healthy eating painless and enjoyable! We've evaluated the research and learned from successful losers the most effective and efficient methods for achieving permanent weight loss, as well as enhancing quality of life. By investigating what you want to accomplish and why to a deeper degree, First Place 4 Health will help put you on a personalized track for safe and healthy weight management that is spear-headed by individualized goal-setting. And to show you just how enjoyable the Live It way of eating can be, you'll also get to join me in a kitchen and see just how much delicious and appetizing food is available to you on another one of our new DVD segments.

These are just a few of the general foundations of the new First Place 4 Health program. Stay tuned to learn more and please consider visiting us at one of our Kick-off Events or the Leadership Summit. I'd love to meet you!

To good health,

Erin DuBroc, MPH, RD, LD

Letting Go of Fear

*For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you,
do not fear; I will help you.*

I S A I A H 4 1 : 1 3

To leave something that is known and enter a place that is unknown might seem adventurous to some, but most folks who encounter change experience some level of fear. I began pursuing a different life for myself when I turned 22. After spending years walking a path paved by self-destruction, I made a decision to flee from the only life I had known to pursue the unknown. I knew very little about God, but I was certain that I wanted a different life.

Nearly 23 years have gone by since I took my first few steps into that new life of freedom. I know that I could not have taken one step without my Daddy's hand holding me up and giving me the strength and courage to face my fears. My Daddy is still holding on to my right hand and helping me overcome my fears.

We don't know what trials, tribulations, gains or losses will enter into our lives tomorrow, next week or next year. The unknowns in life pop up without warning. How can we live our lives free of fear? How can we leave what is comfortable and embrace a path of healing and freedom? Only by reaching out a hand for our Daddy to hold. God will give us the strength, the courage, the grace and the power to take each step.

P R A Y E R

*Lord, I choose to trust You today. I will not embrace fear but instead will embrace Your
faithfulness. In Jesus' name, amen.*

Journal: Write down some of the fears that you are currently facing. Choose to lay each fear at the feet of Jesus, and then make a decision to trust Him.

Susan Sowell
Author, *A New Creation* Bible study
Katy, Texas

Taken from *Living Well*, new First Place devotional book. To order, call 1-800-4GOSPEL.



Success Story!



I had never really given God first place in my life. He always came up last. My issues with putting God last in my life included not understanding His word and being overweight. I had been praying to God for quite some time that He would send someone to help me with my struggle to understand the Bible. I never felt like He heard me.

I received an email from a friend one day about this program called First Place. I decided to attend the orientation, not knowing what I was getting myself into. The night of orientation I walked into a church I had never heard of before where I only knew one person, the leader of the class. Listening to all of the information that night was so overwhelming. I reluctantly signed up for First Place. I knew I was way out of my comfort zone. The more I thought about it, I started putting this "out of my comfort zone" feeling into a different light. I told myself for the first time that it is not about me; this is for God. Once classes started and we got into the Bible study, I was really struggling. I could do the food part of the program with no problem. I was losing weight

easily. But the Bible study was a different story. By week seven, we were asked to write down a testimony of something great God has done in our life. That was it for me. I had to tell my leader that there was nothing great God had done in my life. I didn't even understand His word. I called myself a "struggling Christian." I met my class leader at her house one night so she could help me with the Bible study. Well, we never even got around to the studies. We talked about my relationship with God, salvation, and all my past experiences with churches. God knew all along what He was doing when I received that first email. He had heard my prayers all this time about sending someone to help me in my struggle with His word. He answered my prayer in His time, not mine. I rededicated my life to Christ that night and was filled with the Holy Spirit. It was the most amazing thing. My life has not been the same since. I can feel God all around me and see what He is doing in my life. I understand the Bible for the first time. Since starting First Place in September 2007, I have lost 57 pounds. I went from 177 pounds down to 120 pounds. I was wearing a size 20 pants and now wear a size 6/8. My blood pressure has come down and I have been able to go off of one of my blood pressure pills. I might get to go off of the other blood pressure pill in a few months. My cholesterol and sugar levels have also come down greatly. But most importantly, God is now first in my life, where He belongs. I know that nothing is possible without Him. He has truly blessed me.



*He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters.
2 Samuel 22: 17*

**Julie Schuler
Cincinnati, OH**





Spring Rolls

Serves 6

Dipping Sauce:

2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 tablespoon fish sauce
1 tablespoon water
1 tablespoon chile paste with garlic
1 teaspoon sugar
2 teaspoons grated peeled fresh ginger
2 garlic cloves, minced

Spring Rolls:

12 (8-inch) round sheets rice paper
3 green leaf lettuce leaves, quartered
3 cups fresh broccoli sprouts or alfalfa sprouts
36 (2-inch) julienne-cut carrot strips
36 (2-inch) julienne-cut cucumber strips
36 (2-inch) julienne-cut yellow bell pepper strips
24 medium shrimp, cooked, peeled, and halved lengthwise
36 fresh mint leaves

To prepare sauce, combine first 7 ingredients, stirring with a whisk until sugar dissolves; set aside.

To prepare spring rolls, add hot water to a large, shallow dish to a depth of 1 inch. Place 1 rice paper sheet in dish; let stand 30 seconds or just until soft. Place rice paper sheet on a flat surface. Arrange 1 lettuce piece in center of sheet. Top with 1/4 cup sprouts, 3 carrot strips, 3 cucumber strips, 3 bell pepper strips, 4 shrimp halves, and 3 mint leaves. Fold sides of sheet over filling; roll up jelly-roll fashion. Gently press seam to seal. Place spring roll, seam side down, on a serving platter (cover to prevent drying). Repeat procedure with remaining rice paper, lettuce, sprouts, carrot, cucumber, bell pepper, shrimp, and mint. Serve with dipping sauce.

Exchanges: 1/2 bread, 1/2 meat, 1 vegetable

Pasta with Pesto

Serves 4

2/3 cup basil
1 9-oz. pkg. fresh fettuccini
1 tbsp. olive oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups sliced roasted red bell peppers
1/2 cup pitted olives, halved lengthwise
Salt and pepper, to taste

Place the pesto in a large bowl. Cook the pasta according to package directions. While the pasta is cooking, heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and cook, stirring until soft, about 30 seconds. Add the peppers and olives and cook, stirring until hot, about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Drain the cooked pasta, reserving 1/3 cup of the water. Whisk the pasta water into the pesto. Add the pasta to the pesto and toss to combine. Add the peppers and olives and combine.

Exchanges: 2 breads, 1/2 vegetable, 1 fat

Fruit Freeze

Serves 8

1/2 Cantaloupe (about 4 cups cut up) OR 4 cups Fresh Strawberries (Not both)
1/4 cup Orange Juice
1 tbsp. Splenda/Sugar or Honey (optional)

Put all in blender and process until smooth. Should make about 2 1/4 cups. Chill until ready to serve. Roast 1/4 cup sliced almonds; cool. Chop very fine. Place 1/2 cup frozen sugar free/fat free vanilla ice cream (or yogurt) in bowl. Pour 1/4 cup fruit blend over top of ice cream. Sprinkle with almonds.

Exchanges: 1/2 bread, 1/2 milk, 1/2 fruit