

Eating for Life

We all have to eat. Marvelous as our bodies are, they are in fact very complex machines which require fuel in order to function. We require energy in order to be active and, in the same way a car burns fuel, we “burn” food. Excessive fuel consumption means the engine is consuming too much for the amount of power it returns. In the same way, if we overload our engine with more food than it needs and/or use the wrong types of fuel, then our performance will be affected. We build up deposits of unburned fuel in the form of body fat and of course, the efficiency and the life expectancy will be reduced as we place the extra loading upon it.

It isn't useful to lay out a specific, rigid diet for ourselves. Most of us have tried specific, sometimes exotic ways to lose extra pounds, and by now you will have realized that the only thing you will lose permanently is the money and emotional energy paid out for diet fads, appetite suppressants, and sometimes you may have experienced real health risks that last a lot longer than the weight loss (e.g. ephedrine, fen-fen, amphetamine-based products).

The basis of successful, long term weight management is learning how to take control of your own basic eating habits, and taking responsibility for your own health and well-being.

First, you have to address your eating habits and be honest with yourself: When do you eat, where do you eat, and how do you eat? Why do you eat? Do you chew your food thoroughly savoring each mouthful or do you make a race of it, cramming in as much as possible in a short time? Do you eat on the run? Do you reward yourself with food? Do you pacify or comfort yourself with food when faced with stress, disappointments, and frustrations? Do you eat snacks between meals? Do you eat when you are bored?

Second, an extremely important question that you must ask yourself is “Do I really want to lose weight?” and if the answer is yes, then “Why”? You need to be sure that you are doing this for yourself, your self-esteem and to improve your own health, and not some fad or because someone else wants you to lose weight.

Next, you need to make a realistic plan for setting and achieving realistic goals. If you do not eat at set times each day, they right now set a time that you will designate as mealtime. Then make a plan for where you will eat. If you find yourself eating in front of the TV, then you need to break yourself of this habit. Sit at a table and concentrate on what you are doing, eating slowly, chewing your food properly, and savoring the taste and texture. You'll be amazed at how much more enjoyment you can get from mealtimes if you take the time to taste the food.

Reinforce your determination and the new, healthier eater that you are becoming. While you are eating, maybe have specific music that you enjoy playing in the background. Pick music that makes you feel happy or soothed. This might be a good time to think of your Affirmations; enjoy the visual image you have of yourself at your goal weight; think and plan the activities and exercise you are planning to do later that day or this week; maybe have a notebook beside you to record the thoughts that go through your head as you are eating. Any and all of these things will help you reinforce your determination to build healthy eating habits and to reinforce your confidence in yourself that this time you are really going to achieve your goals, and will be able to maintain your healthy weight as just another habit you are developing to be a happier, healthier you. You will be reinforcing you.

Drink plenty of water and other healthy, non-sugary beverages. As you begin to lose weight, it will be necessary for you to drink plenty. Drink water, juices, enhanced vitamin drinks. It is best to not drink alcoholic drinks, since they have plenty of calories and little nutritional value. (Some alcoholic beverages can also stimulate your appetite as well as decrease your judgment...). The water and healthy beverages help flush away the toxins that are stored in your body fats.

Some food do's and don'ts:

“White foods” such as cakes, pies, white flour pasta, white bread, biscuits, sausage rolls, etc. or any foods made with white, refined flour need to be off your menu. Make a list of all the white flour products you can think of, and remove them from your house.

Avoid sugars: don't add to your coffee, your cereal or any other food. Avoid candies, pies, puddings, etc. made with sugars. There are many sugar substitutes that are not unhealthy: Splenda and Stevia are two sweeteners that are made from natural ingredients and can be used guilt-free in all places you would use sugar, including baked goods.

Many Dairy Products are to be avoided. Check all of your dairy food choices and find the low-fat, no-fat alternatives. Low-fat cheeses and spreads, yogurts and many other dairy choices can be found. Use low-fat cottage cheese in recipes to replace ricotta cheese, on baked potatoes instead of sour cream, etc.

Shopping can be a new, pleasant adventure! You will enjoy the quest for those foods which are healthy and beneficial, and you will no longer suffer the pangs of guilt when you choose foods you know are good for you.

Get ready for the New You: As you begin to lose the weight that you have carried around for so long, you will feel better about yourself, more confident and more energetic, no longer having to carry around all of that excess fat. Imagine carrying around a 60 lb. bag of sand everywhere you go: and know that ***Now and forever more, you will have laid that bag down, never to pick it up again!*** As you feel better, you will become more determined to increase that feeling of well-being, more motivated to become the person who is in control, who has the body you want and that you deserve. Fruit and vegetables become a regular part of your daily diet. Keep cut up fresh vegetables in your fridge for a quick munch. Have low-fat or fat free dips (some made with low-fat yogurt) ready for your TV munchies. You don't have to give up all of your habits: you just need to change them a bit to be healthy habits.

DON'T:

- Don't allow yourself to become obsessed with foods that you cannot have. It doesn't pay to be too hard on yourself; if you slip, or even on purpose eat a food you would normally not include in your new eating habits, enjoy it and carry on with your eating plan.
- Don't treat any food as a “taboo.”

YOU ARE IN CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE, AND YOUR EATING. You are aware of what is good for you and what isn't. You also know whose job it is to look out after your health. It is your body, the only one you know for sure you will ever have in this lifetime. Look after it and know how good it feels as you move ever closer to your goal, and know that you have the plan to maintain the healthy you for the rest of your life.

***ENJOY THIS ADVENTURE! IT WILL BRING MANY GOOD THINGS TO YOU,
NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH IS PRIDE IN YOURSELF!***

