

# Why We Eat What We Eat

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**Lesson Overview:** What makes us hungry and how can we curb our appetite? Sometimes we eat because we are hungry and sometimes we eat because it is a habit and/or tradition. This lesson will provide the simple science behind why we eat what we eat! It will also provide some tips and suggestions for making healthy decisions when we eat, whatever the reason!

## Develop a Healthy Relationship with Food

### The thing to do:

Many people eat for reasons other than hunger:

- Tradition
- Celebrations
- Social
- Habit
- Boredom
- Comfort: death, illness, birth, etc.

### Traditions:

- Holidays
- Birthdays
- Celebrations

### Comfort:

- We were taught to comfort someone, feed them
- Death, illness, or birth in the family was the cue to start cooking and start eating

### Social:

- Dates
- Parties
- Job interviews

### Habit:

- Time of day
- Location
- Event (movies, ballgames, etc.)

### Bored, Anxious, or Stressed:

- We are always hungry when we are bored...stay busy!
- If we are nervous, eating seems to make the problem go away...does it?
- When we are stressed, chocolate and/or ice cream seems to cure all things! By the way, this is a MYTH!

If you know something is coming up and food is going to be an issue, plan ahead and make a healthy choice!

## Our eating habits are causing Americans to get BIGGER!

To help control weight:

- ◆ Drink lots of water
- ◆ Eat foods high in fiber
- ◆ Eat for a purpose
- ◆ Stop eating when full
- ◆ Choose healthy munchies
- ◆ Do not skip meals

# Traditions

## Foods Served

## Holiday/Event

Turkey, Potatoes, Cranberries, Pumpkin Pie

\_\_\_\_\_

Ham, shrimp, eggnog, COOKIES

\_\_\_\_\_

Ham, Asparagus, Deviled Eggs

\_\_\_\_\_

Chili, apples, popcorn, cider

\_\_\_\_\_

Popcorn, cola, and candy

\_\_\_\_\_

Hotdog, peanuts, and a cola

\_\_\_\_\_

FUN Questions:

1. You're not hungry, but have you ever eaten one more cookie because Grandma only makes them at a certain time of the year?
2. Have you ever walked out of a restaurant to drive to a movie theater to watch a movie and purchase popcorn, a cola, and candy on your way into the theater?
3. Some people aren't hungry at all, but will always eat something at a certain event because it is the thing to do. Can you name a situation like this?

What options do you have when it comes to traditions?

1. Freeze the cookies
2. Eat a light dinner
3. Plan ahead

# Comfort

Food habits start at a young age. We tend to do things that we did as a child. When dealing with children, ask yourself, what am I teaching? Am I teaching a healthy habit?

## **Situation**

## **Food Response**

## **Non-Food Response**

Had to get a shot

Ice cream cone

\_\_\_\_\_

Break-up with significant other

Chocolate, ice cream, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_

Bad day at work

Big steak dinner

\_\_\_\_\_

Bombed a test/exam

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

BIG question: Could exercise, a bubble bath, or a long phone call with a friend be a substitute for the food response?

Other suggestions:

## Social Eating

- We are entering the National Feeding Season. This typically runs from Thanksgiving to Super Bowl Sunday.
- Apparently, in the state of Indiana, one can't watch football without eating a variety of foods. Listed below are three foods typically served at a "football party". Can you find a healthier substitute?

### Typical Food

Chicken Wings

Nachos

Pizza

### Healthier Option

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

HINT: You can have the same food items, just make some healthy adjustments.

Example:

1. Bake the chicken wings and toss with lemon pepper instead of buffalo sauce which is basically a stick of margarine/butter and tabasco/hot sauce
2. Use baked tortilla chips, turkey chili or all beans, and light cheese and sour cream
3. Make your own whole wheat crust and top with lots of vegetables, Canadian bacon, and low-fat mozzarella cheese

## Habits

- We are conditioned to eat 3 meals a day. Plan on these meals and you can control your calorie intake a lot better
- If you had a big or late breakfast, you may not have to eat a big lunch at noon, just because it is noon. Sometimes a cup of non-fat yogurt, a handful of nuts, and a piece of fruit will satisfy your hunger and nutritional needs
- If you know you will be someplace and food will be an issue, eat something light before you go so you don't over-indulge. Perhaps a turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread or a bowl of high fiber cereal.

FUN Observation:

Have you ever discussed Thanksgiving with someone from another country who is now living here? They are amazed that we make a meal a holiday! Think about it. What other traditions can you start on this holiday?

- 1) Work on the family genealogy project while all are present
- 2) Start a jigsaw puzzle
- 3) Scrapbook or make pages for a photo album everyone can take home

## Bored, Anxious, or Stressed

- Women tend to be more susceptible to emotional eating than men
- Exercise is a great way to deal with boredom, calm anxious nerves, and relieve stress
- If you aren't a big exerciser, try a POWER cleaning of your house. Turn on some music and dance as you vacuum, strut your stuff while washing windows, and break out some fun moves when you are dusting. After all, you are probably home alone so who cares. If you aren't, recruit others to join in the fun! Trust me, there are memories to be made here!

## Ban the "Clean Plate Club in your house

- Making people clean their plate only encourages OBESITY. It is teaching someone who is full to continue to eat. When dealing with children, they can be tricky, but so can you. When they claim to be full, take their plate, wrap it with plastic wrap, and place it in the refrigerator. When they are hungry again (about the time you've finished cleaning the kitchen), pull it out, warm it up and give it back to them! You will only have to do this once or twice. They will figure out your game!
- Do not encourage wastefulness, but encourage individuals to take what they can eat. If they aren't sure, encourage them to take a small amount and tell them they may have "seconds". Additional helpings are better than being wasteful.

## Manage your munchies!

Fruits and vegetables are your best filler when you have the munchies. Can you identify which foods are the best source of the following nutrients?

Circle the best answer:

1. Select the best source of vitamin A:    a. Cauliflower                    b. Greens                    c. Apple
2. Select the best source of vitamin C:    a. Apple                            b. Banana                    c. Grapefruit
3. Select the best source of calcium:    a. Broccoli                        b. Butter                      c. Yogurt
4. Select the best source of iron:        a. Milk                              b. Meat                        c. Dried Fruit
5. Select the best nutrient-dense food:    a. Cake                             b. Cherries                    c. Fr. Fries
6. Select the best source of  
    Phytochemical food:                    a. White Rice                b. Potatoes                    c. Yams

Answers: 1. b, 2. c, 3. c, 4. b, 5. b, 6. c

Source for lesson: <http://www.cdc.gov/>

# Eating For the Health of It

## Celebrate with this bubbling “punch”

1 12 oz. can of 100% frozen juice concentrate (any flavor)

36 oz. carbonated water, unsweetened and flavorless

1. Mix the two together,
2. Stir and serve over ice.

You will get the sensation of “soda pop”, but you are drinking 100% juice.

## “Souper” Soup for a Social Event

6 med. potatoes, peeled and diced  
2 sm. onions, diced  
1 carrot, grated  
5 c chicken broth  
1 T parsley  
1 T salt  
1 can fat free evaporated milk  
1 c grated sharp, reduced fat cheddar cheese

1. Put all ingredients except milk and cheese in a crock pot
2. Cook 10–12 hours on low, 4-5 hours on high
3. During the last hour of cooking, add the can of milk
4. Serve immediately and top with shredded cheese.

## Tabouli—A new family tradition

3 c finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

1/2 c finely chopped fresh mint

4 finely chopped green onions

4 ripe, medium size tomatoes, chopped

1 c cracked wheat

1/2 c lemon juice

1/2 jalapeno pepper, de-seeded, diced

3 T olive oil

Salt & pepper to taste

1. Rinse cracked wheat several times and soak in cold water for 20 minutes. Drain.
2. Place cracked wheat in bowl with remaining ingredients.
3. Toss well.
4. Cover and refrigerate for a few hours or over night. If too dry, add additional lemon juice and/or olive oil.

## Manage Your Munchies Pasta Salad

12 oz cooked lean pork, cut into strips

1/4 t salt

4 oz (vegetable enriched or whole grain) spiral pasta, cooked, rinsed, and drained

3 c broccoli flowerets

1 1/3 c diced mushrooms

1/2 c diced red pepper

1. Place items in a bowl and top with dressing.
2. Serve immediately.

Dressing:

8 oz plain non-fat yogurt

2 oz feta cheese, crumbled

1 t chopped parsley

1/4 t oregano leaves

Combine dressing ingredients and pour over salad