

March Weighing In 2014

Burying Our Blankie

When our daughter Jennifer was very small she had a security blanket she took it everywhere. We could not leave the house without "Blankie". It was her constant companion; she felt secure with the blanket wherever she went. Restaurants, hotels, grandparents' house--- it did not matter--- Blankie was along with her.

Recently, a lady came into the office to discuss her weight loss problems. She had been everywhere, from all of the popular weight loss programs to considerations for gastric bypass and gastric banding. She was so distraught that my heart broke for her. She described how her weight had destroyed her life. She told the story of going to Disney World and having to stand and watch her children ride all the rides alone because she couldn't fit in them. She talked about having to sit at a table instead of a booth in a restaurant. Even while in high school her weight had been such an issue that it ruined a lot of her teen-age years. She made the statement that her comfort food was her security blanket---her Blankie.

If she felt good, she ate; if she felt bad she ate. It didn't matter what was going on--- food always made it better. Her emotional eating was her main problem. Experts estimate that 75% of over-eaters eat because of emotions. Many of us learned that food brings us comfort, but it's only for a short term and then we suffer the consequences of what we've been eating. Eating becomes a habit preventing us from learning coping skills that can effectively resolve most of our emotional problems. Depression, boredom, chronic anger, frustration, stress, and problems with interpersonal relationships or family problems and our own poor self-esteem can all result in overeating and unwanted weight gain.

When you identify the triggers of your emotional eating you can substitute more appropriate behavior to manage your emotional problems and take food and weight gain out of the equation. So how do we identify what our eating triggers are? There are five triggers explained here.

1 **Social.** Eating when other people are around, for example. Excessive eating can result from being encouraged by others ie your mom would say to clean your plate, or you need to fit in with others, or you feel inadequate around people.

2. **Emotional.** Your eating is a response to boredom, stress, fatigue, depression, anger, loneliness, or a way to fill "the void in your heart".

3. **Situational.** Eating because there's an opportunity for you. You happen to be at a restaurant and see an advertisement for a particular food that you haven't eaten in a long time so you indulge. You pass by a bakery and you smell the aroma of your favorite cinnamon roll and just have to buy one. Eating may also be associated with certain activities such as going to the movies, sporting event, or just watching television.

4. **Thoughts.** Your low self-worth is a result of negative feelings. You make excuses for why you need to eat the way you do, for example, and then you scold yourself and feel worse. You are unhappy with your looks or your lack of willpower to control your appetite.

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5. **Psychological.** Your eating is a response to physical cues. For example, your hunger is increased because you skipped a meal. You may be looking for some relief for your headaches or some other pain that has been prodding you for a long time much like migraine headaches or fibromyalgia. Identifying what triggers excessive eating and keeping a food diary that records what you eat and when you eat as well as what stressors trigger you your thoughts or emotions will help you identify what the problem is. Once you identify patterns, you can fairly quickly correct them.

How to stop your emotional eating. Identifying your emotional eating triggers and your bad habits is a major step. It is usually the first step; however, this alone is not sufficient to alter eating behaviors. Usually by the time you identify a pattern of your eating response to your emotion or certain situation, the habit is already developed. Now you have to break the habit that may have been with you for some time.

Alternatives to developing an eating program as a second step. When you reach for food in response to an eating trigger, try to follow one of the activities I've listed below.

1. Go for a jog or walk
2. Talk to a friend
3. Write a letter that you have wanted to for a long time
4. Do housework, laundry or yard work
5. My favorite is read your Bible and pray

The next time you feel like you need to grab your Blankie for comfort, remember your companion may cost you several pounds. It's amazing to me over these years that we have worked with patients for weight loss how many resort to their old habits out of an emotional trauma. Isn't it interesting that the thing you're fighting the most always comes back to haunt you? Yet the Bible says that no weapon formed against you shall prosper. Why do we allow these weapons that are used against us to prosper? The key is that we allow it! Nobody forces you to eat what you shouldn't; you make those decisions. Making those decisions over and over again brings you back to the habit. The habit becomes part of you and this vicious cycle starts all over again.

It's time to bury your Blankie---that's right, bury it. That's what we did with Jennifer's Blankie. When there was nothing left but a string, we put it in a box, carried it out back and buried it in the ground. Blankie had gone on to be with Jesus. She understood that it was time to put it to rest. This is what you need to do with your habits--

- put them to rest. Author John Maxwell says
“Learning to just say no makes a huge difference in your life. I've learned to say “no thank you” multiple times. This keeps me from doing things I really don't want to do and making mistakes. People learn to receive no without any hard feelings because they realize you're being honest.”

Hopefully you will put some of these ideas to work for you.

Blessings to all,

Chuck Shaffer M.D.

Recipe of the Month:

Breakfast Bowls

Serves: 5-6

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons coconut oil
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 pound ground turkey
- ½ pound ground pork mild Italian sausage
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon dried parsley
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoons dried rosemary
- 2 (16 ounce) cans of roasted red peppers (pureed)
- ½ cup fresh basil, finely chopped
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 5-6 eggs

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Heat up a large saucepan over medium heat, add two tablespoons of coconut oil then add minced garlic cloves, then bell peppers and onion along with a little salt and pepper to the pan.

Move vegetables around until onions become translucent.

Add ground turkey and Italian sausage to the saucepan and break up the meat.

When meat has begun to cook through, add the spices.

When meat is almost done cooking, pour in the two cans of pureed roasted red peppers.

Salt and pepper once more, then reduce heat and let simmer for 5-7 minutes.

When all the flavors are well mixed, add the chopped fresh basil.

Place meat sauce in some sort of individual baking dish, use a spoon to press a small spot in the middle of the meat sauce, then crack an egg or two into the middle.

Put in oven and cook for 8-10 minutes until egg is cooked to preference.

Eat up!



Nutrition and Behavior:

As a Nutrition professional, I know how important good nutrition is for the body and mind. I recently did a presentation on clean eating and it reminded me of how artificial American food has become! At the Weigh Station, the food you buy is REAL food, nothing prepackaged or with artificial flavors or colorings. It's amazing that simply cutting out processed foods can change not only our health but also our behavior. Recently I have experienced this first hand while watching my three year olds eating habits.

I guess you could call me lucky; as a Mom of a three year old (and a five month old) I have heard my share of horror stories from Mom's with picky eaters. My daughter on the other hand by no means falls into this category. At six months of age she was eating avocados and by her first birthday we discovered that she loves sardines which she still enjoys to this day. She actually asks for vegetables and is pretty adventurous when it comes to trying new foods. Having said that, she's still THREE! She loves sugar when she can get her hands on it (which lucky for us, isn't very often). However, after days like Valentine's Day, it's inevitable that she's going to have a few treats hanging around the house. Normally, I would describe my daughter as a little shy, the type of little person that can just sit quietly and concentrate on whatever it is she's interested in. As soon as she eats junk (whether it's goldfish from church or a sucker from her schools valentines party) something crazy happens, she turns into a different person. She doesn't listen as well, becomes hyper and by the end of the day is much more cranky than usual. If I went a day not knowing what my child ate, I can assure you that I'd be able to tell if she had any processed foods or sugars!

This got me thinking, if kids have such a drastic shift in personality based on their nutrition then how do these foods effect adults? Of course we aren't going to dance down the halls at work and throw a tantrum before the end of the day but it must effect us somehow right? I did a little research and this is what I found:

Aspartame has more than ninety symptoms! These include rashes, cramps and pain in the tendons and ligaments (per the FDA). In addition, it has been documented that neurological events like vertigo, ringing in the ears, headaches and depression have also been reported. Aspartame releases methanol when heated which can cause behavioral disturbances and inflammation in the nerves.

Sugar consumption can also be a problem especially in individuals at risk for or with diabetes. Recent findings showed that blood sugar levels at the high end of normal resulted in significant brain shrinkage, particularly in the area of the hippocampus which is involved in memory.

Although these are just a few small examples, it goes to show that good nutrition isn't all about the waist line. Our goal at The Weigh Station is to make not only your body healthy but also your mind. Now that's food for thought!

Tricia Foley, MS, RD, CLT

Source:

<http://www.westonaprice.org/environmental-toxins/violent-behavior-a-solution-in-plain-sight>