



Eating When You're Not Hungry

Dr. Charles Shaffer

One of the most frequently asked questions we receive is, why do we eat even when we're not hungry? The reason is due to boredom. When we're bored, we typically head straight to the refrigerator. This can also be the case when you're avoiding something, like a difficult project or task. It gives you a break and takes your mind off things. So, how do we unlearn this behavior? Try engaging your brain in other activities than reaching for food. Take a walk, do a mini-workout, or read a few pages of a book. Puzzle books are great as they keep your brain occupied for a few minutes.

It's normal to want variation and flavor in our diet and daily routine. For small changes, like needing a replacement for soda, try a flavored water. Eat a pickle if you need something that's sweet and salty.

Cravings can be difficult to control when in social situations, especially if you're a nervous eater. It can be all too easy snacking endlessly on appetizers and finger foods.

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Other times we eat when there is an unmet emotional need. It's best to seek out comfort in other ways. Many bariatric experts recommend physical activity or things that get you moving. Not only is it healthy for your body, it's healthy for your brain and helps combat a negative mindset.

If short-term physical activity doesn't seem to help, you may need to think of a more long-term approach. Behavioral therapists can be extremely helpful in learning, recognizing, and addressing emotional barriers.

Mindlessly eating starts as simple boredom. It becomes a habit when you're going to the refrigerator everyday at 3 PM. Eventually, your body expects food at 3 PM and you experience cravings until you give in.

Often times, patients will not actually be hungry when they eat because they have restricted themselves to only eat at certain times. As a result, they're not satisfied with their meal and look for comfort food to meet their needs. Learning how to be free from this behavior and eating a balanced meal will keep you from gaining your weight back.

Many of you have been encouraged to place an index card on the inside of your refrigerator and kitchen cabinets, reading 'why are you here?'. Being honest with yourself makes a big difference in finishing the program and maintaining your weight.

An easy habit to give into is eating in the car during a commute or a long road trip. It passes the time and may be convenient to get your meals in. If you've come to associate a car trip with food, you may need to use the index card trick.

Dr. Phimney of UC Davis says that specific environment can stimulate the urge to eat even when they're not hungry. Restaurants are meant to encourage cravings. Depending on the restaurant, they will intentionally use larger plates in order for you to eat more. Additionally, you may be tempted to order dessert simply based on its sweet aroma.

Mindful eating is one of the best strategies for losing weight. It's also important to commit to practicing improving your overall health and mobility. Start out with portion control. Nibbling can be healthy as long as you don't consume too many things that slow down your weight loss. Don't wait until you're ravenous to eat, as it can be difficult to stop. Moderate portions throughout the day and measuring your ingredients makes a huge difference. Listen to your body and avoid food groups that can lead to feelings of deprivation.

If you stay on track and follow the book you can lose weight without any trouble. The next time you pick something up, ask yourself if you really need it. Most of the time, the answer is no. If this is the correct answer, then put it down. It will become easier each time you do this.

We are always here to answer any questions and help in any way we can.

A quick update on operations: the Weigh Station will be transitioning back to dispensing phentermine from the office. This will be effective within 30 days. We noticed a pattern in some patients weight gain, with the common denominator being that patients are not coming in for a follow-up after picking up a month's worth of phentermine. Their weight gain is happening because eating correctly is the secret to weight loss, not phentermine.

Additionally, we do not dispense 37.5 mg tablets of phentermine, and I have the reasoning as to why many time over the last 15 years. Higher doses make it easier to develop a tolerance, then as soon as you stop taking the medication, you gain your weight back plus an extra 30 pounds.

All of these changes are meant to help you on your journey. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns and we would be happy to speak about them.

Blessings,
Chuck Shaffer MD

The Recipe of the Month

Hot Chicken and Artichoke Dip

(Makes 12 servings, 1.5 ounces protein/portion)

Ingredients

- 2 C shredded Swiss cheese
- 1 can (16 ounces) premium chunk breast of chicken, drained and flaked
- 1 can (8 ounces) artichoke hearts
- 1/2 C olive oil based mayo
- 1/4 C heavy whipping cream
- 1/2 C diced red bell pepper
- 1/4 C parmesan cheese
- 1/4 TSP garlic powder
- 1/4 TSP hot pepper sauce



Directions

Combine all ingredients into a 1 1/2 quart oven-proof casserole dish. Bake for 20-30 minutes at 350 degrees, or until the mixture is hot and bubbly and the edges are brown.