

# WEIGHING IN APRIL 2011

## Are you an Emotional Eater?

Is your best friend, Häagen-Dazs ice cream or Little Debbie cakes? Do you snuggle up at night with a bag of potato chips, M&Ms or a candy bar welcoming the solitude so you can eat with another uninterrupted food spree? If you see yourself in any of these situations you're emotional eater (a person who eats in response to their feelings).

The question you need to ask yourself is why am I an emotional eater? When the most comforting thought in your head are the candy bars stashed in your desk drawer, and you know that you have a problem. Why do you continue?

Food, like tobacco and alcohol or drugs can be an addiction and it can be your drug of choice. In particular, quick and easy, high carbohydrate, high sugar foods are addicting because they numb feelings with the surge of glucose in the insult of insulin. When life gets too stressful, boring or intense.. food can become the emotional anesthetic. It makes you feel better for so many different reasons.

Emotional eating protects people from tensions and worries as strange as it may sound or seem. Emotional eating can be calming; it "works" for at least a short course of time. That's why it's such a difficult cycle to break for most people. The emotional facts are that it often is easier and less upsetting to be angry at yourself. Perhaps you are afraid of the feelings of disruption, loneliness or abandonment that can come with being angry at a significant other in your life.

Often an upsetting feeling can be transferred into an emotional eating binge, though the distraction of food, repetitive chewing and swallowing, and excessive food thoughts, intense feelings are redirected into eating or overeating behaviors.

These behaviors tend to be psychologically safer than the confrontations you have with someone you love, which might cause conflict in your home. Such as arguments, disharmony or withdrawals from family/friends.

The first step in breaking the emotional cycle of eating and overeating is to find out what things trigger that cycle. Often, this is not an easy thing for you to do. You have to be a bit of a detective to look for the cues that any time you find yourself needing or wanting to overeat or deviate.

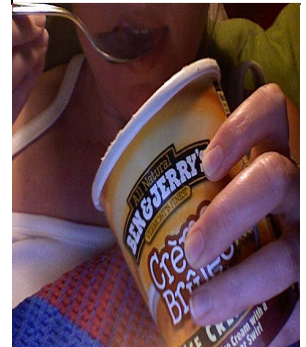
The best way to do this is to look for cues.....Make a Cue Sheet

I'll give you some examples at the end of this article. Hunger will have little or nothing to do with it... you will probably feel terrible about yourself afterwards.



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Food is a dangerous anesthetic, to cure your emotional eating. You need to bear some of the discomfort..... The discomfort of an argument or the discomfort of someone disconnecting with you.. The alternative harmony is only obtained through your silence in the act of swallowing your true feelings along with a large list of food.

Everybody wants a loving, accepting relationship. But real life is more complicated. Relationships between friends and family are prickly and not smooth. The price tag of a smooth relationship is one that allows for failure, growth, encouragement and a loving relationship. We here at The Weigh Station want you to feel comfortable sharing with us your episodes of not eating correctly, your emotional eating, and your failures. By expressing these problems. You may feel better about yourself. This program was designed as a Christ centered, weight management practice. We want the best for every patient who walks through the door.

#### How to Stop Emotional Eating

- 1, Record the Emotional over Eating or Eating Episode on the Cue Sheet
2. Find the Situation and Interactions That Directly Precede It.
- 3 Find the Association with Each Preceding Interaction until You Discovered the Emotional Cause for Your Eating.
4. Permit Yourself to Be Upset about Your Feelings to the Situation or the Person That Has Caused You  
This distress.
5. And Choose Alternative Behavior Other Than Eating Such As, Exercise, Reading, Walking, or Some Sport That You Enjoy.

Please let us help you work through any of these situations that may be involved in your weight gain or your static weight over the last few months. There's not a day that goes by that someone doesn't ask us what am I doing wrong. A lot of people eating is mindless, and we know that. Please feel free to tell your story to anyone that works with us at The Weigh Station.

Chuck Shaffer MD

### The BMI Debate

As you know, each week you are measured, weighed and your BMI is calculated. At the beginning of your journey with us, your goal weight was determined in part by where your weight would fall under a healthy BMI (19 to 24). Have you ever stopped to think what BMI actually is?

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a weight to height ratio and is a nice tool for objectivity; however it does have its limitations. The biggest limitations are that it does not account for age, bone density or muscle mass and therefore isn't always a valid gauge of health. In fact, by BMI standards Arnold Schwarzenegger in his body-building days would be obese.

It is estimated that men and women normally gain about 2.4 lbs between the ages of 20 and 30; gain 1.3 lbs between 30 and 40; and gain another pound between age 40 and 50 as part of the natural aging process. The original BMI scale does not account for this. Therefore, someone in their 60's may have a BMI greater than 24 even though they are at a healthy weight for their age. There is a newer adjusted BMI scale for age that allows a higher BMI for older adults that would still be considered healthy. \*We are considering switching to this method at The Weigh Station.

In addition, men and women's BMI standards are the same despite the fact that women naturally are supposed to have more body fat than men. The overweight threshold for a male's body fat is 25% while a women's is around 30%, so why is the BMI threshold for men and women the same? If a man and women were the same height and both had a body fat of 25% and 30% respectively their BMI would be vastly different. At this time there is no formula to correct for this so it is important to understand that BMI is simply a measure instead of a clinical diagnostic tool. In fact, BMI was never meant to be diagnostic.

Invented in 1832, BMI was originally developed to identify the "normal man" in standard proportions based on the average human build. It was not intended for obesity related diagnostics. Quetelet (the founder) noticed that weight varied not in direct proportion to height, but in proportion to the square of height. (People 10 percent taller than average were inclined to be about 21 percent heavier.) So what should you focus on?

BMI is still helpful; however waist circumference may be a good supplement to pay attention to at your visits. It is a direct measure of the part of the body that tends to accumulate fat. Studies have found that a waist of more than 35 inches in women and 40 inches in men indicates the highest risk of cardiovascular and metabolic disease. In addition there is an increased risk of disease for women with measurements of more than 32 inches and men whose measurement is over 37 inches.

Body fat is still the gold standard however it can be time consuming and have a greater margin of error. If you have additional questions please feel free to ask one of our staff members.

Motivation, we all know that to be successful we have to have it but how do you get it? What do those highly motivated people have that you may not? How do they stay focused and seem capable of achieving anything? This month we are going to find our “motivation” by answering the question “What do I want?”

So, what do you want? Without an answer you are going to have a tough time being motivated so let’s break down the thought process a little bit.

1. Write down four different health/fitness goals that answer the question “what do I want?” Put some thought into these answers. Do you want to lose weight or do you really want to look good in a dress? Do you want to exercise five times a week or would you rather have greater self confidence and feel good? These things are definitely linked but which is a goal and which is the path to that goal?

2. You must now answer some very important questions about your goals and rank them from least to greatest.

- a. Which of these goals do I have the most time for?
- b. Which goal will be the most fun?
- c. Which goal is the most important?
- d. Which goal will have the most positive impact on your life?

3. Now that you have a good idea about what goal you should be working on first, it’s time to create a plan on how to accomplish your goal. Start by writing down what it will take to get where you want to be. If you are unsure, ask someone who may know, talk it out with a friend or research it. Are there multiple steps to achieving your goal? If so, write them down. Are you going to need special facilities or a daily amount of time dedicated to reaching your goal? The key is to plan ahead and think things through before you start.

4. With your plan created, its now time to look a little further ahead and ask yourself “what am I going to do if I need help?” We all stumble occasionally or get stuck in a rut but if you prepare for it in advance you will be back on track immediately. Is there a friend or family member who will give you the support you need (even if it is a boot to the backside?) Is there a different approach you could take that may be more suitable to what you want? Just like a fire drill, if you plan for a crisis, when the crisis occurs you will navigate it smoothly and with minimal lasting effect.

5. The fifth step is to set some mini goals. These should be easy to attain and be stepping stones on the path to your greater goal. If your goal is to run a 5k, then a good mini goal would be to run 15 minutes continuously. If your goal is to lose 5% of your body fat, then a good mini goal would be to pack a healthy lunch for one week. The point of a mini goal is to create positive reinforcement. When you see that you can complete a task you have set for yourself, you create an atmosphere where anything is possible.

6. Pick out a suitable reward and make it valuable! Get yourself something you wouldn’t under normal circumstances. You are creating a life altering change and the reward should reflect that. This reward needs to be something physical, something you can touch, smell or feel. Something to strive for on top of the satisfaction of accomplishment. Something to show or tell your friends about that will make them want it too.

7. Pick out a suitable consequence and make it valuable. Have a favorite TV show? If you don’t succeed, take it away (and not just an episode but an entire season!) Planning a vacation? Not if you don’t make it! Want that new piece of electronics? Well, you get the point. Keep a prize dangling in front of yourself but always know that there is a “Big Bad Wolf” behind you.

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8. Print it, post it, tell it, yell it! Put a copy of your goals up on your refrigerator. Put a copy up in the bathroom. Tell your spouse and all of your coworkers. Let them know what you are going to accomplish and when you will accomplish it by. This will create your accountability (you don't want to let all these people down!)

9. Time to put your plan into action! You've plotted your course, you have a destination and you know all the mile markers along the way. Its time to begin your journey!

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## Recipe of the Month

### Strawberry Cucumber Salad

Ingredients:

Serves: 4-6

- 2 pickling cucumbers
- 12 strawberries
- 1 tablespoon champagne vinegar
- 3/4 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon mint, chopped

Directions:

**Prep Time:** 20 mins

**Total Time:** 1 1/2 hrs

Instructions:

Peel the cucumbers and slice thinly. Hull the strawberries and slice thinly (save one strawberry). Arrange the cucumber and strawberry slices on a round, shallow serving plate. Do an outer circle of cucumbers. Do a slightly overlapping inner circle of strawberries. Continue making inner circles. Finish with the saved strawberry, sliced in half, served on top in the center. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with vinegar. Drizzle with olive oil. Chill for one hour. Just before serving, garnish with chopped mint.

Source: Kraft Foods <http://www.food.com/recipe/strawberry-cucumber-and-mint-salad-299772#ixzz1GITmxVQH>

