



## News, Updates, and Emotional Eating

*Dr. Charles Shaffer*

Emotional eating is all too common. It is so easy to cave and indulge when we are in our feelings. Whether we are happy, angry, or sad, we all tend to reach for food for comfort.

Before I begin my usual reflection, I would like to share some news and updates for the Weigh Station. April started out with a bang! We have a new full-time physician on board. Dr. Jenna Montana has joined our team and we are excited for her new ideas. We believe she will be able to help many of our patients.

I am taking a sabbatical to teach diagnostic medicine and obesity at Saba University School of Medicine. Of course, I still prioritize my patients and will be available for telemedicine visits. We will have online discussions with patients, and you can ask that I contact you at your convenience.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE:

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Additionally, you are able to call the office to set up an appointment with me, whether it be via Zoom or by phone. Our prescriptions are set to electronically transmit to your preferred pharmacy. We have found it to be much cheaper for patients to go through Good RX.

This will ultimately save you, our patient, money each month. Anytime we are able to deliver the same quality product or service for less to our patients, we do our best to implement it. If you have not updated your preferred pharmacy with us, please let us know at the time of checkout or by calling our office.

I see nothing but good coming out of all of this. I feel the need to relate to the next generation of physicians that will be taking care of obese patients. Terri and I have been involved in weight management for the last 16 years. I am excited about sharing my experiences with the new physicians in practice. This is not a permanent transition, just a short sabbatical. We will be back to see patients in the fall, but I will always be in touch via telephone, telemedicine, or Zoom.

I have prayed about it and feel this is what God wants me to do at this point in my life. Developments in obesity management are vast and everchanging. We must keep new physicians updated on the best treatments and courses of action on how to take care of these patients. They tend to be more complicated than primary care physicians realize.

There are new drugs entering the market with promising data, but they are also costly and have shown not to be much better than our current therapy. However, the drug companies have medicines in the pipeline, so they promise to work a little bit better than what we are currently doing.

Patients must realize drugs are not the answer to obesity. Changing your thought process and habits is key to staying to stay within weight management guidelines. These two things will most certainly be your drive to success.

Dr. Jenna Montana will assist many of our patients on their journey. Her nutrition and diet composition background makes her perfect for the role.

We hope you all embrace and enjoy these upcoming changes. Each of you are incredibly important to us and we want you to know we are doing all we can to make your journey and battle with obesity easier. Please be flexible with the staff as these new developments are put into motion. I think you all find it much easier to be accountable.

Now that business is taken care of, on to the newsletter. Here are some simple steps to help many of you deal with your eating habits. I think you'll find them easy to accomplish.

Emotional eating can sabotage your weight-loss efforts. It often leads to overeating – especially too high-calorie, sweet and fatty foods. The good news is if you are prone to emotional eating, you can take steps to regain control of your eating habits and get back on track with your weight-loss goals.

### **How the mood-food-weight loss cycle works:**

Emotional eating is eating to suppress or soothe negative emotions such as stress, anger, fear, boredom, sadness and loneliness. Major life events, or more commonly the hassles of daily life, can trigger negative emotions that lead to emotional eating and disrupt your weight-loss efforts. These triggers might include relationship conflicts, work, financial problems, health problems, and other stressors that cause fatigue. Although some people eat less in the face of strong emotions, the majority turn to impulse or binge eating. If you're in emotional distress, you might feel the need to quickly consume whatever is convenient without enjoyment.

In fact, emotions can become so tied to eating habits that you automatically reach for a treat whenever you're angry or stressed without thinking about what you're doing. Food also serves as a distraction. Suppose you're worried about an upcoming event or are stewing over a conflict. In those cases, you may focus on eating comfort food instead of dealing with the painful situation.

Whatever emotions drive you to overeat, the end result is often the same. The effect is temporary. The feelings return, and you likely bear the additional burden of guilt about setting back your weight-loss goal. This can also lead to an unhealthy cycle – your emotions trigger you to overeat, you beat yourself up for getting off track, you feel bad, then repeat the same habit.

### **How do you get back on track?**

When negative emotions threaten to trigger emotional eating, there are steps you can take to control cravings. To help stop emotional eating, try the following tips: keep a food diary.

Write down what you eat, how much you eat, when you eat, how you're feeling, and how hungry you are. Over time, you might see patterns that reveal the connection between mood and food.

Tame your stress! If stress contributes to your emotional eating, try stress management. Additionally, ask yourself if your hunger is emotion or physical. If you ate just a few hours ago and do not have a rumbling stomach, you're probably not hungry. Give the craving time to pass and get support. You're most likely to give in to emotional eating if you lack a good support network. Lean on family and friends or consider joining a support group.

Fight boredom. Instead of snacking when you're not hungry, distract yourself and substitute a healthier behavior. These behaviors can be as simple as taking a walk, watching a movie, listening to music, reading, surfing the internet, or calling a friend. Although distracting yourself is a great method, if the temptation is there, you may only be able to distract yourself for so long. Take away the temptation and rid your home of hard-to-resist comfort foods. If you're feeling angry or blue, postpone your trip to the grocery store until you have your emotions in check.

Don't deprive yourself. When trying to lose weight, you might limit too much, eat the same foods repeatedly and banish treats. This may just serve to increase your food cravings, especially in response to emotions. Eat satisfying amounts of healthier foods, enjoy an occasional treat and get plenty of variety to help curb cravings.

It's important to reflect and learn from setbacks. If you have an episode of emotional eating, forgive yourself and start fresh the next day. Try to reflect, learn, and plan how you can prevent future episodes. Focus on the positive changes you are making in your eating habits and give yourself credit for making changes that will lead to better health.

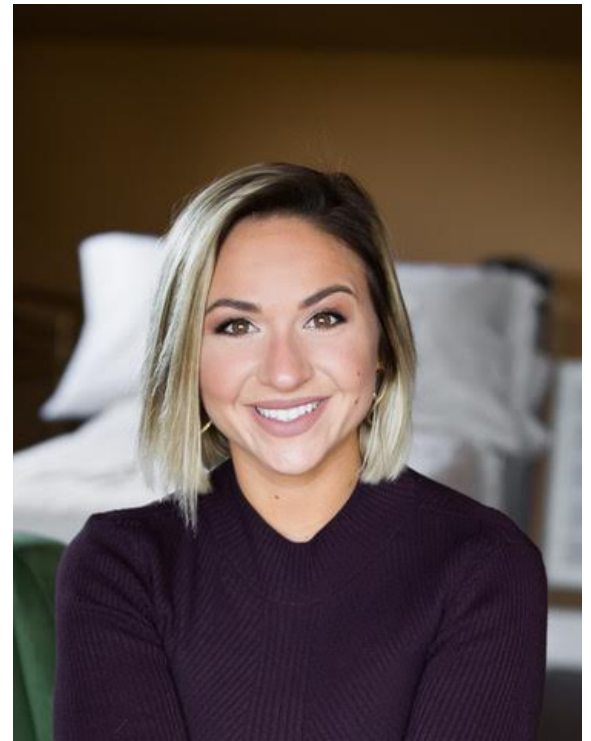
Be blessed. We are here to help. Just call and we will answer  
Chuck Shaffer MD

## Meet Our Team!

Dr. Jenna Montana

The Weigh Station would like to welcome Dr. Jenna Montana to our team! We are delighted to welcome her on board and extend our warmest wishes.

Dr. Jenna Montana is a functional medicine practitioner and acupuncturist. She has been working in Virginia since September 2018, when she started her own practice, Cultivate Wellness. Dr. Montana holds a Bachelor of science in Exercise Physiology, a Master of science in Clinical Nutrition and Human Performance, and a doctorate of Chiropractic Medicine. She is one of the very few certified functional medicine practitioners in the Roanoke and New River Valley, and the only provider to combine this precision therapeutic approach with the ancient healing modality of acupuncture. She is thrilled to join The Weigh Station team in helping people meet their weight loss goals and achieve their personal definition of wellness. When not in the office, you can find her running (slowly) with her two dogs Echo and Zelda, or poking around the Blacksburg Farmer's Market with her husband, Dr. Tyler Garapola (her favorite Chiropractor!)



# The Recipe of the Month

## *Cabbage Rolls*

*Makes 4 servings (3 rolls each)*

### *Ingredients*

- 1 medium cabbage
- 1 lb lean ground beef
- 1/2 onion, chopped
- 1 bell pepper, chopped
- 1 tsp salt and pepper
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 beaten egg

### *Directions*

Prepare a large pot of boiling water, remove core of cabbage and place the cabbage in the water. After a few minutes, the top leaf of the cabbage will loosen. Remove with a tong and place to the side, repeat until you have 12 leaves. Meanwhile, combine all other ingredients and place some of this mixture (about 1 1/2 tsp) on each cabbage leaf and fold “envelope” fashion. If the leaf is tough, make a V shaped incision and remove part of the coarse spine.

You can also try rolling the cabbage around the filling and tuck the ends into the roll with your fingers. Lay flap side down on a cookie sheet coated with foil. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. If you wish, you may top each cabbage roll 2% cheese.



**Light, Flavorful,  
Delicious.**