



## The Way Our Habits Have Changed

*Dr. Charles Shaffer*

As you may have noticed, there are multiple news articles and journals covering the long-term effects of obesity. We are able to confirm there is a direct link between obesity and certain cancers, obesity and early-onset dementia, and between obesity and diabetes. There are many different reasons as to why an individual gains weight and we want to educate our patients on all of the different factors that play into weight gain as well. Many factors are genetic, some are brought on by poor habits, and others are brought on by the amount and sheer volume of food consumed each day. While conducting research, it is easy to see the average portion sizes and food in America before the 1950s was vastly different than it is today. Dr. Wendy Scinta narrates it perfectly:

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“Everywhere you look, something is blamed for America's obesity crisis. ‘We are overeating and moving too little.’ ‘It is due to our stress and our lack of sleep.’ We are dining in our car, eating on the run, and choosing foods from a box or a fast food restaurant over healthy, homemade meals.

Yesterday, fat was to blame, and today it is sugar. As we search for the truth on how to keep our families healthy, it is impossible to ignore some of the more apparent changes taking place in our food-filled environment — especially as it pertains to portion sizes.

Over the last twenty years, the American diet changed dramatically both in terms of the quantity and quality food intake. In 1970, Americans took in an average of 2,160 calories per day. Today, it has skyrocketed to 2,673 daily calories per person. We are now eating 20-25 percent more calories than we did in 1970!

How did this happen? Interestingly, both plate sizes and portion sizes expanded before our eyes. With the introduction of processed, shelf-ready food in combination with new agriculture policies, food became cheaper and easier to get our hands on than it was in the 1970s. If you combine this with a society that is always looking to get a bang for their buck, you end up with price wars over who can give you the most food for the least amount of money.

Whether you choose to get ‘supersized’ meals at McDonald's or have the ‘all you can eat pasta’ at Olive Garden, what value-based pricing saves you in cash today may get you tomorrow with the cost of medications and hospital bills.

Many of the meals we are eating out at restaurants contain as many calories as we need in an entire day. Research has shown that the more often you eat out or on the road, the more weight you gain.

If we look at individual foods and compare calories from the 1970s and 1980s to today, it is really telling. The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) has a quiz on their website that every American should take, detailing the tremendous changes in portion sizes over the years. Take the quiz for yourself — the answers will shock you!

Here is a summary of how some of our favorite foods have changed:

Unfortunately, it is not just the quantity of food we are eating; that is the problem; it is also the quality of macronutrients, such as fat, carbohydrates, and protein. Unlike lean protein, which tends to help increase muscle mass, the added calories in our diet have been made up of grains, sugars, and unhealthy fats. Our body can only store so much glucose (the breakdown products of carbohydrates) as energy. The remainder is stored in the liver and fat cells in an unhealthy manner, creating inflammation and contributing to diseases such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes.

Given that news, what can we do to help our families stay healthy, or improve our health in this kind of environment?

Here are a few tips to help every family survive and thrive when it comes to portion sizes:

1. When eating out, ask for a to-go box and take half of your meal home.
2. Try to order protein, such as meat or fish, or plant-based food such as tofu, over carbohydrates such as pasta, rice, and potatoes.
3. When eating out, ask to hold the starch (pasta, potatoes, rice) and double up on the veggies.
4. When serving food at home, use smaller plates for the main course, and larger ones for the salad.
5. When eating at home, try to buy fresh, local produce in season. Stay away from processed foods as much as possible.
6. When plating your food, make half of the plate veggies and salad. The other half should be split into 2/3 protein, and 1/3 carbs. The starchy carb items should be the smallest part of your plate.
7. Have your family get up and serve themselves. Do not leave the food on the table, or everyone will eat more.
8. When lured by more food for less money, look to see if they are just adding more starch (pasta, French fries or rice). If this is the case, don't bite!
9. Limit eating out to no more than once per week and try to cook more healthy meals at home.
10. When eating, just eat! Refrain from watching TV, using electronics, or reading a magazine or book”.

Remember the saying “you are what you eat and what you eat can change you for better or worse”. Each and every decision you make has lasting consequences. You can make yourself better or worse depending on the volume and type of food you choose to consume. If you're having trouble sticking to the program, let us know. If you have stalled and are in a plateau there is a reason. Every individual can be successful; it is just the matter of letting us know if there is an inconsistency and addressing it. If you are searching for recipes or inspiration, please take a peek at our website and Facebook page as there is tons of recipes and ideas located there.

Blessings,  
Chuck Shaffer MD

# Back To School

*Tricia Foley*

The end of summer is quickly approaching and for many, this means changing schedules. Whether you're a teacher, student or have a kiddo going back to class, chances are something is going to shift in your schedule for back to school. Even if you aren't one of the above, your commute may be just a bit more time consuming thanks to the busses getting back on the road!

With this in mind it's important to have a game plan. Ask the following questions before heading back to school: Will you need to adjust your bedtime by more than 30 minutes? How will your morning routine change? What can be done ahead of time to help you work smarter not harder, to keep your wellness goals on track?

**Sleep:** With this in mind, start to make adjustments sooner than later. The more adjustments needed, the more time you will want to allow yourself. For example, if summer bedtime is at 10pm but the kids school bedtime is 8pm, starting to go to bed a little earlier over time will help. Start moving bed time back by 20 minute increments; 9:40pm for two nights, then 9:20pm, 9pm, 8:40pm, 8:20pm and finally 8pm over a two week period before school starts. This will help them (and you) acclimate to the new routine and give you more energy throughout the day! Having enough sleep will not only help you stay on track nutritionally speaking but is also essential for weight loss and overall health!

**Morning Routine:** Your morning routine is also going to shift, start thinking about breakfast options for you and the kids. What will be simple in the morning- maybe it's cottage cheese and almonds. Be sure to have your fridge stocked up ahead of time.

**Working Smarter:** Also consider the big picture. Look at your schedule and identify your most flexible days, these can be grocery shopping days as well as prep-days for cooking dinners and packing lunches ahead of time. You may also want to think about the nights that are busiest and plan ahead to have a crock pot meal, left overs or have some emergency foods like tuna packets and frozen veggies available to throw together a quick but healthy meal! Working smarter, not necessarily harder means having a system that you can use during everyday life will give you the tools needed to stay on track in any situation.

Although it may take some forethought, these tips will keep you off of auto-pilot and default mode where choices that don't serve you are often made. Occasionally this can happen even with the best laid plans. If this happens, be kind to yourself and explore what happened and how you can get back on track instead of judging yourself.

# The Recipe of the Month

## *Chicken Salad Stuffed Pepper*

- 1/3 C mayo
- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tbsp seasoned rice vinegar
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/3 C chopped fresh parsley
- Meat from 1 rotisserie chicken, cubed (about 1 lb)
- 4 stalks celery, sliced
- 1 bunch scallions, sliced and divided
- 1/2 English cucumber, diced
- 3 bell peppers, halved and seeds removed

### ***Directions***

In a bowl, combine all ingredients except for the halved bell peppers. Mix well and then spoon into each bell pepper half- enjoy!

Provides 1 fat and 2.5 ounces of protein as well as 1 serving of veggie per portion.



**Let's Get Cooking!**

