



Eating Disorders Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dr. Charles Shaffer

This month has been exciting as we have seen patients returning from as far back as 2007. All of them have the same common denominator: they slipped into their old habits during the COVID-19. It can be all too easy to munch while sitting at home and grabbing things that have little to no significant nutritional value.

As the coronavirus spread across the United States, and the world, it changed people's daily routines and lives. Never before have we seen so many masks, gloves, and gowns. Having been exposed to COVID-19 multiple times at the walk-in clinic, God has blessed me with no illness. However, that does not mean I take it for granted. I strictly follow directions and recommendations from the CDC and NIH, but admittedly it can become tricky as those tend to change on a month-to-month basis.

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Adjusting to the working from home lifestyle can prove difficult for many, as most Americans are not used to sitting at the computer all day. When you're only a few feet from the kitchen, it proves that much more difficult to curb cravings. Munching has caused many patients to gain their weight back, making them even more discouraged.

While such disruptions are not harmful to everyone, quarantine has been particularly difficult for those who suffer from eating disorders. This includes disorders such as anorexia nervosa, carbohydrate intolerance, or binge eating disorders.

Initially, the pandemic was riddled with uncertainties. No one knew what or who to believe, and many turn to snacks for comfort. The typical quarantine snacks include pizza, chips, candy, and soda. It has all come roaring back into the American diet.

New data from the National Association of Eating Disorders has shown that women in their midlife are now expanding the market of the unique challenges within the eating disorder population. Many women are struggling to manage their eating behaviors and symptoms due to the radical disruption caused by the pandemic.

Their children's needs also weigh upon them. Their symptom management and recovery plan become increasingly difficult to maintain as family responsibility becomes their highest priority. Because of this, women tend to forget about themselves and their needs. Additionally, we live in a culture that is obsessed with thinness, youthfulness, and looking your best 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This culture creates constant pressure on women of all ages, but it significantly impacts those who are in their midlife.

Personal appearance helps shape the identity we want to present to the world around us. While personal appearance isn't too important at the moment, many still believe they need to keep up their personal grooming routine and schedule appointments for various things. The inability to maintain these personal routines has put pressure on women, especially those that have sat at home trying to lose weight – combined with the pressure to be productive at all times. During this crisis, many people are expected to focus on their work all day while working from home. However, that can seem near impossible when children are involved.

Emotional eating disorders are hazardous for most people in midlife because it tends to exacerbate physical health problems. As you all know, those who are obese are at greater risk of developing COVID-19 and subsequent health issues than those who are thin and

healthy. Diabetes, hypertension, and other chronic illnesses also make individuals more susceptible to the disease

Some individuals believe there is a silver lining to the pandemic. We've now strengthened the adoption of Telehealth, which makes it more convenient to access physician services. While telemedicine allows you to be one-on-one with your physician or healthcare provider, it is quite different than being able to physically touch someone and look them in the eyes to get a real sense of what is going on in their lives.

If you are having problems and cannot make it to the Weigh Station, do not hesitate to contact us by telephone, email, or Zoom. I am praying this pandemic will be under control soon and we can return to our everyday routines. Please follow what you are taught; read your book, make smart decisions, and ask questions if you are unsure.

God bless each of you. We continue to pray for you, even if you have separated from us for months.

Blessings,
Chuck Shaffer MD

The Recipe of the Month

Berry Mousse

**Makes 8 servings, (1 fruit/serving)*

Ingredients

- 1/4 C boiling water
- 1/3 package unflavored gelatin
- 1 C heavy whipping cream
- 4 packets Truvia
- 2 C berries (of choice), pureed in blender
- 1 package strawberries (no sugar added, if frozen)

Directions

Blend 2 cups berries in a blender and mix until pureed; set aside. Pour boiling water on gelatin in cooking pot and allow to boil until gelatin is dissolved.

Beat heavy whipping cream and Truvia in chilled, large bowl on high speed until stiff while adding gelatin. Continue to add berry puree to whipped cream. Refrigerate about 3 hours until served. To serve, dollop 2 tablespoons mousse over 3 large strawberries. Enjoy!



**Light, Flavorful,
Fan Favorite.**

