

Bariatric *focus*

HELPING PATIENTS STAY FOCUSED ON WEIGHT LOSS EVERY DAY

Patients Need To Be More Mindful Of Their Hunger And Stress As Well As Develop Better Coping Mechanisms

Chronic Stress Leads To Eating High-Fat Foods

Many people say they eat more when they are under stress. Others eat less. But people under chronic stress are more likely than others to say they eat fattening foods and feel that their eating is out of control, according to a study presented at a recent meeting of the Obesity Society.

In one of the largest surveys ever to examine the relationship between chronic stress and eating behaviors, researchers at the University of California-San Francisco questioned more than 600 women who were overweight or obese about their eating habits and life stressors. The women were categorized as having chronic stress if they had ongoing stressful situations such as being unable to pay their rent or mortgage; feeling stuck in a job they don't like; having a spouse or partner who expects too much of them or doesn't understand them; having a child who isn't doing well in school; or acting as a family caregiver for someone in poor health.

The researchers found that people who had greater chronic stress were more likely than the other survey participants to say they ate high-fat foods and felt they lacked control over their eating and hunger.

Those who were chronically stressed also

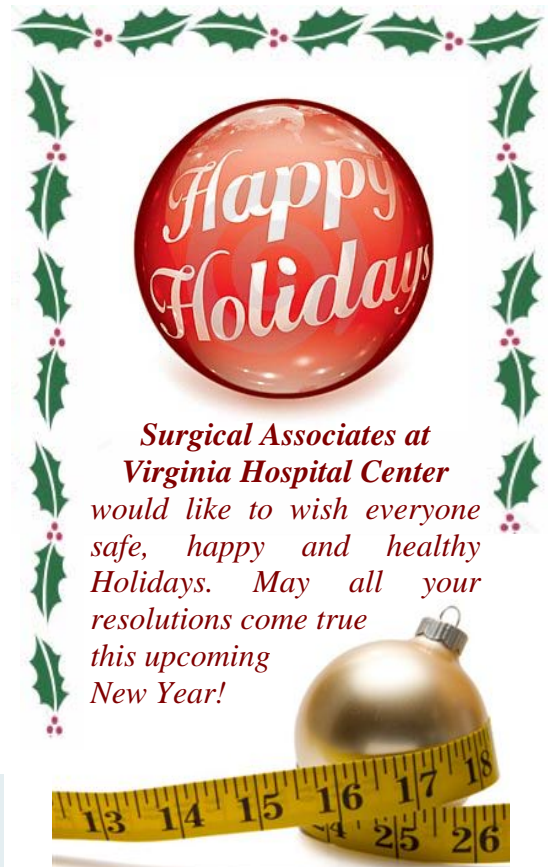
were more likely to rely on "rigid restraint" to try to control their weight, including vowing to avoid fattening foods and skipping meals to get a handle on their affinity for fatty fare. Of course, these methods usually don't work, and they tend to compound an eating problem.

Chronic stress really taxes people's ability to self-monitor their eating behavior. In our current environment of abundantly rich food, we need every ounce of conscious effort to manage our eating, because eating is an automatic behavior we can do too easily and too often if we're not mindful. And perhaps no one period provides more of these conditions than the Holiday season!

Patients who have had weight loss surgery are not immune to this trend, says Dr J. R. Salameh, Medical Director of Bariatric Surgery at Virginia Hospital Center. "Surgery allows you to control the amount of foods you eat but not the type of food. Stress can lead patients to eat the wrong foods such as those high in fat and sugar and consequently sabotage their weight loss."

Patients should try to take themselves out these chronically stressful situations if at all possible. They need to also develop better coping mechanisms. People under

chronic stress should try to notice the difference between emotional hunger and true physical hunger. By being more mindful of their hunger and stress, they can better regulate when, what and how much they eat and keep it more in line with their bodies' needs.



Surgical Associates at Virginia Hospital Center would like to wish everyone safe, happy and healthy Holidays. May all your resolutions come true this upcoming New Year!

Surgical Associates now featured on Obesity Help

ObesityHelp (www.obesityhelp.com) is the most popular bariatric surgery website and the world's largest bariatric community. Membership is free and gives you access to numerous unique features such as creating your own blog, uploading your photos, using the weight tracker to monitor your weight loss, interacting on our message boards, and much more. You can find both Drs. Mayes and Salameh in the Virginia Bariatric Surgeons and you can post reviews and comments on the site after you sign up.



Support Group Meeting

Thursday

17

Our next gastric banding support group meeting is Thursday, December 17 at 7pm. See you there!