

Bariatric *focus*

HELPING PATIENTS STAY FOCUSED ON WEIGHT LOSS EVERY DAY

How to Turn Potential Perils Into Perks

The Never-Ending Snack Attacks

Being surrounded with a vast array of snack food and beverage options at every turn makes mindful and moderate eating a challenge for many. Furthermore, huge portion sizes only add to the problem. In theory, in-between meal snacks can fill in food and nutrient gaps left at meals. But as we all know too well, snacking today has become more of a social ritual, or mindless habit than a nutritional opportunity. Many of us snack while walking and talking, while commuting or driving, or while being a spectator of some sporting event or other activity. Many of us snack not because we're hungry, but simply because the sight, smell, and round-the-clock availability of food are more temptation than we can handle. Snacking on high calorie, high sodium, sugary, or otherwise nutrient-poor foods and beverages can easily contribute to excess calorie intake and subsequent weight gain.

A recent study published in the Journal of Nutrition looked at national survey data collected since the late 70's and found that on average, adults now have one extra snack per day than they did before.

Nutrition Tip of The Month by Julie McGee, RD

Adding Sweetness Without Sugar

Are you looking for ways to add sweetness to your foods but without all the sugar? Seasonings that add the flavor of sweetness include allspice, cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, mace and nutmeg. If you add fruit, you'll get the benefits of their vitamins, minerals and fiber, too!

Try these ideas:

- Add ginger to a fruit glaze. Blend frozen raspberries with a pinch of ginger and a small amount of fruit juice concentrate and toss the glaze with fresh berries or sliced fruit.
- Add cinnamon to coffee before brewing.
- Top oatmeal with allspice, mace or nutmeg.
- Squeeze citrus juices from lemon, lime, orange or grapefruits over fresh fruit.

Adding sweetness doesn't have to mean adding calories. Be creative and see what family favorites you can sweeten up using allspice, cardamom, cinnamon or fruit.

Furthermore, snack choices today are more energy dense (they have a lot of calories in a small portion) and tend to include nutrient-poor foods like salty chips or crackers, desserts, sugary beverages, and candies.

Snacking can be part of a healthy diet. But snacking smart is key if we want to reap the potential benefits and minimize the perils. Here are six snack smart rules to help us get a bit healthier and better manage our weight.

1) *Choose wisely.* Anticipate snacks ahead of time and be sure to include plenty of foods and beverages from the key food groups (fruits, veggies, whole grains, low fat dairy foods, and lean sources of protein) on your weekly grocery list. Choose all foods in their lowest fat and sugar form (such as raw nuts, fat-free plain yogurt, dried fruit without added sugar, unsweetened apple sauce, whole grain/low sugar cereals, whole wheat crackers, and low fat popcorn).

2) *Find where the food (or beverage) fits.* When choosing among processed and packaged foods, think about whether those foods come from any of the basic food groups. If they don't fit neatly into any food group, chances are they won't make the best

snack choice and are more like desserts.

3) *Be a portion teller.* Lisa Young, author of the book *Portion Teller*,

urges consumers to learn how to eyeball portion sizes using common objects (mousepad, dice, baseball, etc) to help them consume appropriate amounts. Keeping on hand small plastic cups and bowls, and small plastic baggies can also make it easy for you to pre-portion snacks and reduce overeating.

4) *Be a selective snacker.* When you're out and about temptations may be tough to handle. Of course you can plan ahead and bring your own snacks; but let's face it, sometimes you just really want a cupcake, a piece of birthday cake, movie popcorn, or some other indulgence! The key is that when you have these foods, make sure to adjust how much you eat that day overall and limit items made with extra fat or sugar to keep your total daily calorie intake in check.

5) *Keep tools on hand to help you end the eating.* Whether it's chewing gum, breath strips, strong mints, or mouth wash, having a few of these on hand can not only leave your mouth feeling fresh and minty, but can help you resist the urge to have "just one more bite," and reduce your risk of eating when not hungry.

6) *Snack when you're sitting down.* Try to make sitting when you eat (preferably at a table) a habit, whether you're home or on the go.

- Adapted from ADA



Support Group Meeting

Thursday

15

Our next bariatric surgery support group meeting is Thursday, April 15 at 7 pm. See you there!