

New Year's: Diet and Binge – *HELP!!*

Sally Van Cise RD, Nutritionist, Nimkee Public Health

Sensing the New Year is coming, do you start thinking “ok – this is the year I lose that weight!!”

Last month, I recommended you not “DIET” before nor during the holidays. Instead, I suggested you focus on eating healthfully. Eating healthfully does not mean “eat celery sticks and baked chicken.” Instead, it means eating three meals and two to three snacks daily, *including foods you like*. On a “healthy diet,” you savor, focus and take time to thoroughly enjoy eating. You give yourself permission to eat your favorite foods!

But you say, I want to lose weight now! Well - a challenge with focusing on weight loss is that one tends to “bust out” of the diet jail, binge on foods that were termed “bad,” and regain the weight and then some. Seeing foods as forbidden often results in bingeing, frustration and boredom with the diet.

When a person eats regularly, includes enjoyable foods daily, savors and eats slowly, one becomes more tuned in to the body's needs. Interestingly, with this style of eating, the weight tends to stabilize and there is not rebound bingeing. Sometimes there is sustainable weight loss.

Here are some basic skills/behaviors to help this approach work:

1: Establish the habit of meal planning and preparation. Now, these meals can be simple to prepare – of course you can use the shortcuts like cooking in large batches when you have time, and then freezing smaller one-meal units to reheat on another busy day. You can include canned, frozen or pre-packaged foods. Some days you will go to the deli to pick up food. And sometimes you will eat out!

- Think of using a three-week menu planning cycle for the dinners. On week four, start again with the week one plan. No one minds the same meal when it was last eaten three weeks ago.

- Remember to include favorite foods, even those you previously thought of as forbidden!

2: Agree to take the time to sit and eat three to six times a day. Some meals you will eat more, and some you'll want to eat lightly. That's ok. Start paying attention to your level of hunger. Usually you don't want to be too hungry. People who skip meals and/or let themselves get too hungry often over-eat!

- Do respect that you may want to eat even though you are no longer hungry! “Natural eaters” *do* over-eat sometimes because the food looks, smells and tastes so good! Less hungry later, they cut back without thought.

3: Agree to eat without multi-tasking: tv and computer off; no homework; no standing at the counter grabbing bites while you feed others and do the laundry; etc. Instead, focus and savor the food, enjoying the conversation if others are eating with you.

4: Remember: give yourself permission to eat, even “forbidden” foods. Then, savor and enjoy thoroughly! You will feel that you've had what you want – you will feel satisfied. And satisfied people don't binge!

For more information or an appointment, call Sally at 775-4615