



WellMASS Monthly Newsletter

JULY 2014

EMOTIONAL EATING

Some people respond to impending deadlines, financial problems, relationship meltdowns, and other difficulties by eating less. But if you respond to added stress by eating more, you could end up with added pounds. Fortunately, you can take steps to avoid stress-related weight gain. To begin, consider which of the following behaviors you're prone to, and then take steps to counteract your usual behavior.

Behavior: You don't have time to prepare healthy meals.

If having a lot to do means less time to shop for fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy ingredients, you may be more likely to grab fast food or order high-calorie, high-fat takeout meals.

Instead: Make simple meals with few ingredients to cut cooking time and shopping lists. Invest in a cookbook with easy-to-prepare recipes or look online for recipes that can be prepared in 20 minutes or less.

Behavior: You crave foods high in refined carbs (white bread, cookies, cakes), sugar, fat, or salt.

Many people have a hunger for sweets, salty snacks, and other processed foods when they're stressed.

Instead: Reach for healthy, filling high-fiber snacks with a bit of the tastes you crave. For example: oatmeal with raisins and a bit of brown sugar for sweet cravings; whole-wheat toast with peanut butter for fat cravings; and air-popped popcorn with a sprinkle of salt for salty cravings.

Behavior: You don't have time to exercise.

As the demands on your schedule increase, time to exercise may be hard to find. Yet research has shown regular exercise plays a significant role in weight maintenance. Many people can't lose weight or maintain a healthy weight without it.

Instead: Accept the fact that physical activity is essential for weight loss and weight maintenance. Also, since it leads to the release of endorphins—compounds that have natural stress-fighting properties—remind yourself that you can't afford to miss working out when you're stressed. Then, look for ways to increase your physical activity—by taking the stairs or parking at the far end of the parking lot, for example.

Behavior: You're not doing anything to manage your stress.

You may not be able to control the stressors in your life, but you can control how you respond to them.

Instead: Be proactive by learning and practicing relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, yoga, or visualization. Address your stress by working on solving your problems, calling a friend for advice, talking with your boss about your workload or challenges, or seeking help from a mental health professional who specializes in stress solutions.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH: PEANUTTY SESAME NOODLES

INGREDIENTS

3 cups cooked whole-grain noodles (any shape you like is fine), rinsed with cold water
2 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil
2 tablespoons raw sesame seeds
1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
1 teaspoon finely chopped ginger root (optional)
1 tablespoon sesame oil (optional)
2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
1 tablespoon warm water
¼ cup crunchy natural peanut butter
1 teaspoon hot chili sauce
½ bunch scallions, chopped

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put the cooked pasta into a mixing bowl.
2. Place a large skillet on the stove and set the heat to medium.
3. After 1 minute, carefully add the canola or vegetable oil. Add the sesame seeds.
4. Stir the sesame seeds in the oil until they are just beginning to turn brown.
5. Turn the heat off and remove the pan from the stove. Add the garlic and ginger and stir until it turns golden brown.
6. Add the sesame oil, soy sauce, and water and mix well.
7. Add the peanut butter and hot chili sauce and mix well.
8. Pour the ingredients in the pan over the pasta and stir until the pasta is completely covered with the peanut sauce.
9. Sprinkle the scallions on top of the pasta and serve right away or cover and refrigerate up to 2 days.

Recipe adapted from [Chop Chop Magazine](#)

JULY CHALLENGE: MINDFUL EATING

Throughout the month of July, challenge yourself to overcome the need to emotional eat by becoming more mindful of the foods you eat and how you eat them. Below are some items to try throughout the month to make small, but achievable changes that really make a difference.

Complete a minimum of one tip per day for 20 days. As you finish a healthy tip, fill in a circle to track your progress. Remember, you can use these tips more than once.

- ○ ○ ○ ○ I ate all my meals seated at a table, with limited distractions.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I put down my silverware in between each bite of food.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I chewed my food 15-20 times before swallowing.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I took a 10-minute walk instead of reaching for food when I was hungry.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I made sure to eat something every 4-6 hours to avoid becoming too hungry.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I chose foods high in complex carbohydrates, like fruits, veggies, and whole grains, instead of refined products.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I ate breakfast today.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I ate healthy snacks that contained fiber and protein in between meals.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I drank at least 8, 8-ounce glasses of water in order to stay hydrated.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I satisfied my sweet tooth with natural sources of sugar, like fruit and dairy, instead of with foods containing added sugar.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I kept a food journal to keep track of my eating habits.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I read food labels and paid attention to serving sizes for the foods I ate.