

Celebrate! *A Healthy You*

A newsletter devoted to helping individuals of every size live in a healthy body

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<http://extension.missouri.edu/stcharles/celebratenl/index.htm>

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Breaking the Food-Mood Connection

This article is another installment from the class A New You: Health for Every Body.

Food has many emotional associations. For example, celebrations of holidays, birthdays, weddings and religious events often include a feast or special foods. These positive food-mood connections are greatly valued by society.

However, some food-mood connections are not so positive, as when food is habitually used as a way to cope with emotions.

Occasional emotional eating is normal, but frequent emotional eating leads inevitably to weight gain.

Many people with weight concerns eat in response to stress, boredom, anger, loneliness, joy or as a reward.

These questions can help determine if emotional eating is a problem.

Consider what is true *most* of the time for you.

1. Do you tend to snack more when you are alone?



1. Do you treat yourself routinely with food?
2. Is eating a favorite food one of

the most pleasant things you do for yourself?

3. Do you have a hard time recognizing when you are physically hungry or full?
4. Do you eat when you are stressed, even if you are not hungry?
5. Do you 'feel' hunger in your mouth rather than your stomach?

Someone who has been using food to cope with emotions for years can find it difficult to know when they are physically hungry, and as a result tend to overeat. One helpful suggestion to determine which type of hunger you are experiencing is to locate where in the body you feel the hunger. True physical hunger is felt in the stomach unless ignored for too long when it may cause headache. Hunger felt in the chest, throat or mouth but not the stomach is likely to be emotional hunger.

The next time you reach for food, pause long enough to ask yourself the following:

- ♦ **Am I physically hungry?**
Tell yourself you can eat, but wait 5 minutes to check your feelings. If you are still hungry, honor your hunger and eat. If you are not physically hungry,

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Commit to Family Meals

January is a fine time for setting goals or making resolutions to better ourselves. Whether or not you have already set some goals for 2007, consider setting a simple one that can have a tremendous impact for every person in your family. Simply eating meals together as a family can have a profoundly positive effect on the health and well being of the entire family.



Many research studies show that when families eat together all members benefit nutritionally by getting more fruits, vegetables, grains and calcium-rich foods and less soft drinks. Teens who eat more family meals come closer to meeting their daily requirements for key nutrients like calcium, iron, vitamins A, C, E, B₆, folate and fiber.

Children learn about nutrition as they develop healthy eating habits. Parents eating a wide variety of foods serve as a role model to their children.

Family meals foster communication between and among family members which leads to closer, stronger relationships and a sense of family unity.

A survey by the National Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University found that young people who ate dinner with their family 5 or more times per week were more likely to get good grades in school. However, teens who had family dinners fewer than

2 times per week were more likely to have tried cigarettes and alcohol.

Making time for family meals can be difficult in these fast-paced times. It does require a commitment and placing value on having a healthy family above other activities. These tips help make this resolution a reality.

1. Start out by having one more family meal per week. If weekday dinnertime is too hectic, add a leisurely weekend breakfast, brunch or lunch. After a month or two of this new pattern, you can then add another family meal each week.
2. Plan simple meals with a main dish, salad, milk and perhaps fruit for dessert. Ask family members to choose a main dish (give small children 2 options from which to pick) so they get to eat some of their favorites.
3. Shop and do some of the advance preparation on the weekend when you have more time. Have family members help with the food preparation and clean up. Even small children can set the table, toss the salad and help clear the table.
4. Show that the time you spend together is important by turning off the television and letting the answering machine get the phone calls. Keep the focus on the family.



Timely Tip #34

Cook Once, Eat Twice

As long as you are in the kitchen, why not make the most of your time by preparing two meals at once. Double your recipe then freeze the second batch for another meal. Most stews, soups and casseroles freeze well, although pasta and noodles dishes are best if slightly undercooked before freezing.

For best results, follow these tips.

- ◆ Divide portion to be saved before serving the meal.
- ◆ Speed cooling by placing food in a pan or sink of ice water. Do not place hot glass or ceramic dishes in ice water as they may break.
- ◆ When cool, package foods in freezer containers or wrap in moisture/vapor proof materials like freezer bags or wrap. Disposable pans are especially handy for casseroles, pies and other foods to be baked before serving.
- ◆ Thaw frozen meals in the refrigerator to prevent growth of bacteria. Remember, freezing does not destroy any spoilage organisms.
- ◆ Many casseroles may be baked without thawing. Additional heating time will be needed.

For more information, contact your local University of Missouri Extension office for GH1505 Freezing Home-Prepared Foods or find it on our website at <http://extension.missouri.edu/>.

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try to sort out what you are feeling.

♦ **What am I feeling?**

This can be difficult to answer. Are you angry, bored, anxious, depressed, nervous, happy? One way to discover feelings is to keep a food journal. Record not only when and what you eat, but also if you ate fast or slow and how you felt emotionally and physically before and after eating. Review this journal to discover what feelings may trigger eating. You may not be able to identify an emotion, especially at first, and that is okay too.

♦ **What do I really need?**

- Something to drink
- Rest
- Comfort
- To express feelings
- To be heard, understood and accepted
- Intellectual or creative stimulation
- To feel needed or respected
- Movement

ways to break the food-mood connection. Below is a list of emotions or feelings.

Lonely
Grouchy
Elated
Nervous
Sad
Excited
Discouraged
Confident
Bored
Jealous
Happy
Irritable
Anxious
Hopeful
Mad
Angry
Scared
Confused
Worried
Disappointed
Ashamed
Frustrated

1. Mark the ones you experience frequently, or write down others more pertinent to you.
2. List the food you associate with 2 or 3 of those moods.
3. Write down the first non-food

action that comes to mind for those moods.

What would happen if you broke the mood-food connection and went straight to the action? Cross out the foods and go straight to the activity to make a mood-activity connection.

Developing this connection will take persistence, patience and commitment. Experiment with different responses and allow yourself the flexibility to sometimes eat in response to emotions.

Most of the time, the emotions, moods and stressors that trigger eating are the everyday garden variety. In these cases, trading actions for foods is a beneficial and positive way of coping. However, when problems have existed for a long time, interfere with the joy of living and seem to have no solution, professional counseling may be advisable.

Having trouble thinking of activities to replace eating? The handout Fun, Non-food Activities is available for free from Linda Rellergert. Her contact information is on page 1.

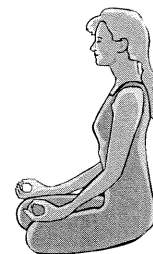
In the *Health for Every Body* class, we use the following activity to explore

Activity Suggestion for January

Try Yoga to Strengthen Mind, Body and Spirit

The connection between mind and body has long been acknowledged as a powerful force by ancient cultures. This connection is now becoming more recognized by modern Western-style science and medicine. Yoga is an ages-old practice of personal development that is based on this connection between body, mind and spirit. It is now gaining popularity in the United States as a tool to relieve stress and improve fitness.

Yoga can benefit anyone from babies to seniors, and can be adapted for any body, from pregnant women to hard-core athletes. Yoga classes for beginners are frequently offered at YMCAs, community college continuing education programs and community recreation facilities. Look for instructional videos or DVDs at the library. Lillias Folan is an especially good yoga teacher who has a number of excellent videos. Two good websites are these:
<http://www.yogasite.com/> <http://www.yogajournal.com/>



Menu of the Month

Hearty, flavorful casseroles banish January's wintery chill in just minutes when made with convenience foods like canned tomatoes and beans. **One Dish Rosemary Chicken and White Beans** features boneless chicken thighs which have more flavor than chicken breasts, yet cook just as quickly. Smart cooks collect speedy, tasty recipes such as this one, enabling them to get a nutritious meal on the table in less time than it takes to drive through a fast food restaurant.

Complete the meal with bagged salad, crusty bread and a glass of milk.

One Dish Rosemary Chicken and White Beans

2 teaspoons olive oil
 1 ½ teaspoons dried rosemary
 ¼ teaspoon salt
 ¼ teaspoon black pepper
 8 skinless and boneless chicken thighs (about 1 pound)
 1 (14.5-ounce) can stewed tomatoes, undrained
 1 (15-ounce) can navy beans, rinsed and drained
 ¼ cup pitted kalamata olives, chopped



Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat.

Combine rosemary, salt and pepper; sprinkle over one side of chicken.

Place chicken in pan with seasoned side down, cook 3 minutes.

Reduce heat to medium and turn chicken. Add tomatoes and beans, cover and simmer 10 minutes or until chicken is done.

Stir in olives just before serving.

Serving Size: 2 thighs and ¾ cup bean mixture. Nutrition information per serving: 316 calories, 8.1g fat, 978mg sodium, 30.2g carbohydrate, 6.8g dietary fiber, 31.2g protein.

Recipe source: Alice Henneman, University of Nebraska Extension, Cook It Quick! Website at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/recipe.shtml>



Words to Consider

"Step by step. I can't think of any other way of accomplishing anything."
 —Michael Jordan

"The drops of rain make a hole in the stone not by violence but by oft falling." —Lucretius

"To succeed, one must be creative and persistent." —John H. Johnson

"Wherever you go, no matter what the weather, always bring your own sunshine." --Anthony J. D'Angelo

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