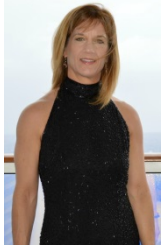


"Forget yesterday--it has already forgotten you. Don't sweat tomorrow--you haven't even met. Instead, open your eyes and your heart to a truly precious gift--today."

- Steve Maraboli

I love this quote because it's not only true, it's a great reminder for me of my dad. Since it's almost Christmas, I was going to write something about how important it is to be thankful, or something along those lines. But then I noticed many people around me overindulging on food, alcohol and everything else the holidays bring. So I decided to write about why it's important not to overdo it this time of year. I'll often hear, "It's the holidays, I'm going to splurge a little." But the problem is, it's usually not a little and not a good reason to overindulge for an ENTIRE MONTH. The reason: you'll end up paying the price for the next year. Please read below about portion control. If you gain weight over the holidays and resolve to lose it in 2020, be sure to contact me and I'll help you do it. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Yours in health,



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Control Your Portions



Do you remember Morgan Spurlock's 2004 documentary, "Supersize Me?" If you never saw it, for one month, he ate nothing but McDonalds' food (gross) for each of his three daily meals. The rule was that any time he placed an order, if he were asked if he wanted to "supersize", he had to say "YES." Thankfully, he was monitored by a doctor because the large amounts of processed and unhealthy food he consumed wreaked havoc on his body and wellness. At the end of the month, his girlfriend, a vegan who was opposed to this experiment for many reasons, helped him detox and get back to good health. It's an interesting and eye-opening documentary and well worth your time.

Portion control is a something that seems to be extremely difficult during the holidays and I don't understand why. It's like when people go on a cruise. They return from a wonderful trip and brag that they gained five pounds, like it's a good thing. In my humble opinion, that's not something about which they should be happy. What they gained in just a week will take months to shed. Worse case, they may never get rid of that newly found weight. It's so much harder to lose than to gain.

If I just described you, don't beat yourself up. For many people, going on a cruise or enjoying the holidays is simply an excuse to overeat. The reality is: if you place food in front of most of us, no matter how much, we tend to eat it. I don't know why we're wired that way....especially as adults. Have you ever noticed how kids don't generally do that? They stop eating as soon as they're full and don't worry about wasting food. All they know is that they can't (and don't want to) eat any more. My son is a perfect example. During dinner, he'll often leave just one or two bites on his plate. He'll look at me and say, "I'm full." He did this when he was little and he still does it today, and he's almost 18. When he's done, he'll literally take his plate to the trash can and dump it. Imagine for a just moment, what life would be like if you stopped eating as soon as you felt full!

Now is the time to be honest with yourself. Do you eat those last one or two bites on your plate, even though you're full, because you don't want to waste it? Or even worse, do you clean your own plate and then eat those last bites left by your children because you don't want to waste their food either? After all, there are children starving in many parts of the world, right? Here's the big problem with that concern: Those extra calories you just ate for no reason other than not wasting them are finding a home around your waist, on your butt and on your thighs.

McDonalds made supersizing a well-known verb, but what they didn't tell you was that it had its perils. Eating too much food in one sitting is really hard on your body. Here's why:

- If you overdose on too much food at one time it can cause bloating, pain, an upset stomach and sluggish digestion. Some people prefer six "mini-meals" per day over three "regular meals."
- When you overeat, a surge of glucose is released into your blood. Your pancreas has to work overtime, pumping insulin through the body so all that extra glucose can be absorbed. The result is that it can make you feel spacey, weak and irritable, or give you a bad headache.
- When you eat too much, your adrenal glands think there's an emergency and they go into "fight or flight" mode. This causes them to release adrenaline and cortisol, which is the body's natural response to stress. Too much cortisol creates its own issues.
- When your blood sugar levels finally plummet after the high they just enjoyed from too much food, you experience wicked cravings for more food, specifically simple carbs or sweets. You feel hungry much more quickly than if you'd had some protein with some good fat.
- When you consume large amounts of simple carbohydrates, the immune system function is affected for at least five hours. This can inhibit your body's ability to fight illness and disease.

The truth is your body doesn't really need a lot of food in one sitting. I recommend stopping before you're actually full and slowing down as you eat. It takes your brain about 20 minutes to send a signal to your stomach that it's full. So if you eat too fast, you end up eating way too much. So this holiday season and going forward, make better choices. Here are a few tips to help:

- Don't over-order. Go for salads, soups and appetizers, which are typically more reasonably sized than entrees. Plus, having soup before a meal, unless it's laden with calories because it's cream-based, will help fill you up and make you ultimately want to eat less. This will save you calories.
- Choose high-fiber foods like vegetables, fruits, beans and whole grains. Again, this will help you feel full and energized, while minimizing your desire to eat more.
- Chew well and slowly to aid digestion. As I mentioned above, it takes 20 minutes for your brain to register that your stomach is full. By eating slowly and chewing longer, your brain has time to register you're full, which will help keep you from overeating.
- Get enough water. We often mistake thirst for hunger. I recommend having a glass of water before you eat. You might be surprised to learn that you're really not even hungry, just thirsty.
- Carry your own snacks. This is really important, especially when you travel. Stock up on snack-sized containers and fill them with things like celery and hummus, cut-up fruit or nuts. I always carry something with me, mostly low-carb protein bars and nuts. I even keep them in my car, my purse and my drawer at work. You never know when you might be hungry and don't have easy access to something healthy. Having healthy snacks available makes it harder to overeat and make bad choices.
- Take one or two bites of a special treat. For me, the best part about a piece of cheesecake is the first nibble. That's what gives my taste buds the most pleasure. The rest is just empty calories. So take a bite or two, savor it and throw the rest away.

Making good choices and using portion control really isn't that difficult. Another word of advice: be sure to read labels on serving sizes for food and beverages. The 100 calories you think you're eating or drinking may actually turn out to be 250 or even more and you don't even realize it.

May all your Christmas wishes come true. Have a wonderful month.