GO VEGGIE GIRL

Eating Your Way Into Balance

Someone asked me recently if I have ever eaten for a weight loss diet. I am too much a fan of food to be successful at this, actually! I have not specifically dieted to lose weight, but I do know that becoming a vegetarian, then vegan (no meat/fish, plus no eggs or dairy) a few years ago helped me lose some extra weight I didn't need! In fact, I lost too much weight at first since I didn't know how to cook / eat vegan food right and due to stress, but I have since mellowed out a bit, eaten well, and am at a good stable weight now that I have learned how to cook vegan food properly! Thankfully, I haven't needed to worry about the weight too much, thanks to the yoga and meditation practices I do daily, staying fairly active, and applying some approaches for eating in a balanced manner that I have learned over the past few years. I try to follow these strategies when eating to make sure I eat the foods my body needs and the amounts it needs.

- I try to focus on my food while eating, not to get distracted with talking or watching tv, etc. That helps me tune into my body while I am eating so that I listen when it tells me I am full, as well as to what types of foods it is hungry for (i.e. protein (from nuts, beans), carbohydrates (like from rice, oatmeal, potatoes, yams), fruits, veggies, etc.), fat (from coconut / olive / sesame oil, avocadoes, nuts), sea salt, water, etc. That way, I keep in balance with what I eat so that I get a blend of all the right nutrients. It can be tricky to eat quietly when you are in a family setting eating together at the table, but I have found that if you show your enthusiasm for how yummy the food is, or how much it is satisfying your hunger, people will tend to focus more on their food and allow you to enjoy yours! When eating, listen when your body says it's full; you can pause and ask it if it wants anything else.

- I try to eat only when I am hungry, not out of boredom, sadness, frustration, exhaustion, or to try something new. When I get a little bit of hunger pangs in my tummy, my blood sugar is a little low, I am a little tired, that means I am ready to eat. Then I eat until I am full, no snacking every couple hours :) I tend to eat a larger meal 2-3 times / day with no snacks unless I am really hungry in the afternoon. (For teens / young adults, it is different, though, they may have to eat more frequent meals and smaller meals since their bodies are growing so much.) The important thing is to eat until you feel pleasantly full, not to try to go hungry, as that will only make you want to keep snacking! Raw organic nuts like brazil nuts, almonds, sunflower seeds (or peanut butter) are very satisfying with

organic bananas or apples or carrot or celery sticks as a snack. It is good to get a blend of protein (nuts) and fruits / veggies and carbs like from oatmeal or a granola bar if your body wants some from your snack.

- I try to drink a big glass of filtered (best is well / spring water) water before each meal to help me flush out my system before eating and to make sure I am eating for hunger not for thirst. Sometimes we may feel hungry but are actually thirsty. If you want, you can add a little sea salt (not regular salt, it is not as good for you) to a glass of water if you are feeling really thirsty.

- If I am feeling like binge eating from anger or other emotional reasons, I try to talk a walk, cool off, read something inspirational, do some housecleaning or put away laundry or dishes, or call a friend before I eat. That way I am not eating out of emotions, but from true hunger. And if I am still not feeling calm and want to eat right away, I try to reach for things that are easy on the system like organic bananas or other fruit, oatmeal, rice, baby carrots, etc. These things will satisfy your desire to munch to relieve anxiety or stress but won't cause major digestive issues! In fact, if you can fill up on good comforting foods like mashed potatoes with coconut / olive / sesame oil and sea salt, oatmeal or rice with cinnamon and bananas or apples and nuts, or rice and beans with some simple spices like cumin, turmeric, and sea salt, with coconut oil, or yams / sweet potatoes with cinnamon, raisins, coconut or sesame oil and sea salt, it will help fill you up, make you feel better, and stabilize your mood so that you don't reach for the cookies! Think baby food :) and love babying yourself!

It is very important with a vegetarian or vegan diet to eat enough protein (from nuts, seeds, and beans) and complex carbohydrates (from whole grains, unprocessed, like rice, oatmeal, grits and from root veggies like potatoes, yams/sweet potatoes, winter squashes like butternut, acorn squashes) so that you stay in balance with your eating. I have seen too many unhealthy vegans (myself having been one of them!) who lived off of fruit, nuts, salad, and bread for a while, and it is not a good long-term diet! I didn't know how to cook vegan food before, and have learned alot since, which is why I like to share this info with people!

Hope this is helpful! Let me know of any questions and how it goes for you. All the best!

Christina Borland, Owner
Go Veggie Girl, LLC