

EATING HABIT IDEAS :

◆ Have regular meals. In addition to keeping metabolism high, eating small regular meals helps keep caloric intake low. Research shows that restrained eaters—those who suppress hunger to skip meals and starve themselves—frequently end up bingeing or overeating. This response is a physiological reaction to both hunger and deprivation. Eat three to six meals a day, spaced at fairly regular intervals, about 3 to 4 hours apart.

◆ Eat in a calm, conscious, and relaxed manner. Chew your food, so you get to taste it. Avoid stress-driven eating by paying more attention to what you are doing—eating—than to what is going on around you. By doing so, you will be more receptive to the internal cues that let you know when you have eaten enough.

◆ Shop with limits. At the grocery store, make your food purchases wisely. Bring home only foods that will contribute to a healthy diet. Most people tend to overeat certain foods, usually sweets and salty snacks.

◆ Learn to cook. Satisfying food offers a variety of tastes and textures. When its natural flavor has not been killed by overcooking or overprocessing food does not require as much added fat or sugar to taste good. This food is hard to find in the commercial world. Your best bet is to cook it yourself.

◆ Make cooking easy. Try to cook when you have time, rather than when you are starved and rushed. Learn a repertoire of quick and easy meals. Prepare foods ahead of time as much as possible, and keep a good supply of basic ingredients in the pantry.

◆ Don't clean your plate. There are two ways to waste extra food: throw it out or eat it. If you feel guilty about throwing food out, save it for tomorrow's lunch or compost it.

◆ When you cook, go for it. Cook as if you are cooking for several people and then portion the food out before you eat. Put all but the one portion you are eating into freezer-safe containers and refrigerate or freeze. You have just eliminated the excuse that you have no time to cook a healthy meal, as you will have several available throughout the week.

◆ Don't wait until you are famished to eat. You will tend to overeat if you wait until you are so hungry you will eat anything.

◆ When you attend a party or event bring a healthy dish or salad. If you bring a healthy option, you will have something healthy to eat when you are there. It might be a good idea to eat a healthy snack before you go so that you are not hungry when faced with the abundant buffet table.

◆ Plan. If you know you tend to get really hungry at 3:00 PM and end up heading for the candy to satisfy your hunger, eat a small healthy snack at 2:30 PM to prevent that hunger.

◆ Mix your meals. Eating carbohydrates, fats, and proteins together will help keep you fuller longer and will provide a balance of nutrients.

◆ Don't eat out of a pot or serving dish; fix your plate. People are more likely to overeat and not even be aware that they are doing so if they don't fix a set portion size on their Plate.

◆ Don't read or watch TV while eating. You will tend to be distracted and may overeat as a result.

◆ Eat slowly. It takes time for the brain to get the signal that you are full. If you eat too fast, by the time you feel full you will end up being stuffed.

◆ Have a plan for dining out. Order sauces on the side and cut portions in half right from the start, putting half the dish in a "to go" container before you start eating. Order extra steamed vegetables instead of higher calorie sides like macaroni and cheese or french fries.