

Eating Styles: The Social Eater

Do you have people around you or have day-to-day activities that are providing cues to eat inappropriately? Social cues to eat can come from friends and family, our jobs, and our social lives.

Think of situations in which you have found yourself eating inappropriately:

- Spouse bringing home favorite foods.
- Family or friends asking you to go out to eat at a restaurant you may have difficulty making appropriate food choices or keeping your portions in check.
- Buying favorite foods for your children because these are foods they like to eat and you don't feel the children should have to "go without" just because you do.
- Co-workers or vendors frequently bringing foods to the office.
- Friend(s), family member(s), or a co-worker(s), who have made a special food and asks you to try the food, stating "This one time won't hurt" or "Oh, come on, only a few bites."
- Holiday's, parties, family gatherings.
- Traveling, vacations and eating out.
- Business breakfast/lunch/dinners.
- Working long hours.

The social cues can come from a variety of situations. Think of a situation(s) in which you find yourself eating inappropriately. Who were you with? What were you doing? Did somebody or someplace have an influence on your thoughts or feelings immediately before you started to eat inappropriately?

Describe the social situation in which or people with whom you find yourself eating inappropriately. Develop a plan of how you will deal with this situation or person in the future. Sometimes all it takes is "No thank you!"

Inappropriate Eating Episode	Who was present and what was their influence?	What could you do differently?

Tips for Controlling Your Environment:

Traveling frequently on the job:

1. Plan ahead and pack appropriate foods to go on the trip.
 - a. If traveling in a vehicle, pack a small cooler and fill with healthy snacks such as reduced-fat cheese individually portioned, such as string cheese, individual containers of cottage cheese, light yogurt or Greek yogurt.
 - b. Single serve packets of nuts &/or dried fruit.
 - c. Single serves fruit (fresh or canned).
 - d. Single serves packages of peanut butter.
 - e. Meal replacement or snack size protein bars.
 - f. Ready to drink protein shakes.
 - g. Whole grain crackers portioned for a single serving size.
2. Staying at hotels: Find the fitness facility or pool to stick with your activity goals.

Working long hours:

1. If you have problems with skipping meals due to the business of the job, plan to have an emergency stash of appropriate foods or meal replacements so you don't have to skip a meal. Meal replacements can include protein bars, protein shakes, single-serve frozen meals such as "Lean Cuisine" or "Healthy Choice" frozen or shelf stable meals. Keep single servings of fruit, light yogurts, reduced fat cheese, and vegetables handy for quick meals & snacks.
2. Keep a list of local restaurants that will deliver healthy food alternatives to the office. Do your homework ahead of time and check the on-line nutrition information for a favorite chain restaurant or go to www.healthydiningfinder.com and check for participating restaurants to plan healthy meals ahead before hunger hits and time is limited.

Eating out frequently:

1. Plan ahead for your meal before eating out to stay within your nutrition goals and avoid being tempted by the menu. Most chain restaurants now have nutrition information for menu items on-line. Check out www.healthydiningfinder.com for participating restaurants and nutrition information to plan healthy meals or download the app "Yum Power" (powered by Healthy Dining Finder) to I-phone or smart phones.
2. Also plan to adjust other meals consumed the day of eating out to stay within your nutrition guidelines. Continue your routine exercise.

Social Events:

Holidays, family gatherings, birthday parties, Super Bowl parties. . . there is a party for every occasion. We often associate certain foods with certain holidays or parties. These are a special part of our lives, and we don't want to miss out. With some planning, you can enjoy the party and stick with your goals.

1. Do not skip meals the day of the party. Follow your eating schedule.
2. Don't go to the party/event overly hungry. Plan to have a piece of fruit or broth based soup prior to the party to lower the hunger level and better maintain control.
3. Go with a strategy. Is the party providing a buffet or a sit-down meal? Are there going to be several appetizers vs. a meal. Are you taking a dish?
 - a. Plan to take a "healthy alternative" that people will enjoy and one you can focus on such as a vegetable or fruit plate.
 - b. Review the food selections and choose a 2 – 3 of your favorites with modest helpings and load up on the lower calorie options such as the vegetables and fruit. Beware of the extras, such as the vegetable & fruit dip.
 - c. Don't drink your calories. Keep a sugar-free, calorie-free beverage in your hand to avoid putting extras on the plate.
 - d. Take small bites of food and chew thoroughly. Slow down and savor the flavors.
 - e. Put the focus on the family and friends and not the food. Avoid standing by the buffet table.
 - f. Don't skimp on the exercise.

Being successful takes planning and practice, and you can do it!