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METABOLIC AND WEIGHT LOSS CENTER

IN THIS ISSUE

- If you know you have an unhealthy habit, why can't you just stop? Read "Behavior Chain Reaction" to understand how our brain develops habits, how unrecognized habits might lead to our unhealthy habits and possible solutions we can routinely practice to help us manage our weight and keep it off before and after weight loss surgery.
- Our Featured Product of the Month — available at Capital Health Metabolic and Weight Loss Center.
- Don't get tricked into eating Halloween treats! See our sweet, Fall-inspired Recipes of the Month!

+ Motivation Corner

"Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet."

— Lida Clarkson

"Whatever is good to know...is difficult to learn."
(Keep on learning!)

— Greek Proverb

"It's easier to go down a hill than up it, but the view is much better at the top."

— Henry Ward Beecher

What's Happening *this* Month

***Post-Surgery Patients:** Our next support group will be held on October 22 from 5 to 6 p.m. Sign up online under the Patient Classes section on our website or e-mail Caroline.

— Don't forget you can swap clothes in the "Capital Closet" from 4:30 to 5 p.m. before the support group. Bring in your clean clothes that no longer fit and "shop" for clothes that might be your size!

— Hope to see you there or at future group meetings on **November 12** and **December 3** at 5 p.m. Pre-op patients are also welcome!

***We Now Sell Quest Bars:** Learn more about these great-tasting, protein-rich bars under the Product of the Month section of this newsletter.

***Bariatric Advantage Products Are Available for Sale:** Protein shakes, multivitamins, calcium,

B12 and iron supplements can all be purchased in our office. Make sure you have what you need before your pre-op appointment.

***Check Out Our Website for Nutrition and Diet Resources:** Go to the Educational Materials section of our website to find information on pre-op and post-op diets, protein shake ideas, meal and snack recipes, goals sheets and more!

***Pre-Surgery Patients:** Sign up for your nutrition classes online. Caroline's October-December schedules are available. Also, sign up for support groups to talk to our post-surgery patients!

***Information Sessions:** For those interested in learning more about weight loss surgery and our program, sign up for our free information sessions on our website. Our next dates are October 22 and November 12 at 6 p.m.

Break Free of Unhealthy Behavior Chains!

Information modified from "The Complete Counseling Kit for Weight Loss Surgery" from The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

If you know you have an unhealthy habit, why can't you just stop? We need to know how our brain develops habits, how unrecognized habits might lead to our unhealthy habits and possible solutions we can routinely practice to help us break free of these behaviors to help us successfully manage our weight before and after surgery.

Our brains have the ability to operate on autopilot, performing behaviors without any conscious thought at all. One way this happens is with lots of practice. Tasks that seem complex at first and take a lot of mental energy to learn (for example, riding a bike, parallel parking, or using a new computer program) become second

nature after performing those actions many times. When behaviors become automatic, it gives us an advantage because the brain does not have to use conscious thought to perform the activity. This frees up our brains to focus on different things. The problem is, when we repeat an unhealthy behavior day after day, the behavior can also go on auto-pilot.

Now that we know how our brain develops habits, we can overcome unhealthy habits by challenging our brains to learn new routines and practicing them over and over again. Usually, however, there is not just one isolated behavior that is the problem. There is a chain of behaviors or steps that lead us to the behavior we consider to be the problem. Therefore, finding the link or step that we should focus on, thinking about what healthy behavior we can do instead, and practicing our new habit daily will help us achieve our ultimate weight or health goal.

Here is an example: our goal is to consume less calories by eating less food from restaurants, yet day after day, we find ourselves ordering egg rolls, fried rice and sweet and sour chicken for dinner from the local Chinese restaurant. And we wonder, "How did this happen again?"

Consuming restaurant food is not the problem on its own. There most likely are steps that lead us to eating at restaurants. When we follow this routine every day, our autopilot kicks in. Even the restaurant sign for Chinese food could make us pull into the parking lot without even thinking because it is programmed in our brain. Then, once we step inside the restaurant, we are more likely to buy Chinese food, and after we've purchased the food, we are even more likely to eat it. Any problematic behavior can be broken down into the steps leading up to the problem. So using our example goal (eat less restaurant food), we can start in the morning to see what could have led us to still eat at a restaurant:

- ↓ **STEP 1** You woke up late for work and did not have time to pack a lunch.
- ↓ **STEP 2** You go to work and unwillingly agree to take an additional assignment.
- ↓ **STEP 3** In order to complete the task and your other work, you stay at work late.
- ↓ **STEP 4** Resentful you took the additional assignment, worked non-stop all day and are driving home late again, you are overly hungry, tired and irritated.
- ↓ **STEP 5** You drive your usual route and see the sign for your favorite Chinese restaurant.
- ↓ **STEP 6** You park in the lot and, without even looking at a menu, you order the sweet and sour chicken combination platter with fried rice and an egg roll.

Each step in a behavior chain represents a chance for goal-setting. For instance, using this example, you make it a goal that even though you took the extra assignment, you will take a different route home to avoid seeing the Chinese restaurant sign when you are vulnerable. Or maybe your goal is to be more assertive and say "no" to the assignment so you can eat lunch and plan ahead for a better dinner option. Identify the steps leading to a problem behavior and write down what your possible solutions could be at each step. See the example below and then practice it on your own!

STEPS LEADING TO BEHAVIOR

You woke up late for work and did not have time to pack a lunch.

You go to work and reluctantly agree to take an additional assignment.

In order to complete the task and your other work, you skip lunch and stay at work late.

Resentful you took the additional assignment, worked non-stop all day and are driving home late again, you are overly hungry, tired and irritated.

You drive your usual route and see the sign for your favorite Chinese restaurant.

You park in the lot and, without even looking at a menu, you order the sweet and sour chicken combination platter with fried rice and an egg roll and eat it when you get home.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Deny additional work assignment the day before to leave earlier and have time to plan a lunch OR go to bed earlier so you have time to pack a lunch in the morning.

- Practice saying "no."
- Assess why you need to take on the additional assignments.
- Remember YOU are worth taking care of and need time in the day to do so.

- Make it a rule to take a lunch.
- Keep a back-up protein bar at work if you need a quick option for a busy day.

- Take responsibility for taking on the extra assignment that day.
- Blow off steam in another way by calling a friend or going for a walk.
- Have a snack like a piece of fruit or ½ protein bar before leaving work to prevent from being ravenous.

- Take different streets home to avoid seeing restaurants.

- Don't bring money with you.
- You walk in and just get a diet beverage instead.
- Look at the menu and plan out a healthier meal option: steamed chicken and vegetables, no rice with sauce on the side.

Recognizing unhealthy behaviors and the steps leading up to these behaviors can help us identify possible solutions to changing our behavior. This is very important when we are trying to lose weight and to prevent regaining weight after surgery.

If we do not learn how to change these behaviors and practice our healthier habits over and over during our pre-op and initial post-op phases, we will just go back to our unhealthy eating behaviors when our hunger signals return and stomach capacity increases, which leads to regaining the weight.

RECIPES of the Month

Opt out of buying Halloween candy. Try one of these nutrient-rich Fall treats instead, and enjoy as an eating event!

SHELLY'S PUMPKIN PRALINE RICOTTA BAKE

— FROM THE WORLD ACCORDING TO EGGFACE BLOG

159.5 Calories, 6.25 gm Fat,
8.25 gm Protein, 5.5 gm Carbs

INGREDIENTS

1 cup ricotta cheese
1/2 cup pumpkin puree (not pie filling)
1 tsp pumpkin pie spice
1/4 cup Sugar-Free Pumpkin Pie Torani Syrup
1 egg, beaten

TOPPING

1/4 cup pecans, chopped
1 tbsp Stevia or Splenda
1/2 tsp pumpkin pie spice

DIRECTIONS

Mix together ricotta, pumpkin, spice, syrup and egg until well combined. Spoon into 4 small dishes.

Mix together topping ingredients and sprinkle evenly on top.



PUMPKIN PIE DIP — CAROLINE LAZUR, RD

185 Calories, 0 gm Fat, 15 gm Protein,
25 gm Carbs [includes apples]

INGREDIENTS

6 oz non-fat Greek yogurt
2 tbsp canned pure pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling)
Splenda (or Stevia) packet
1 drop vanilla extract
1/8 tsp cinnamon
1/8 tsp pumpkin pie spice (or more to taste)
2 tbsp Cool Whip FREE
1 small apple (2 1/2 inch diameter) sliced
(peeled for post-op patients)

DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients except apple. Enjoy with apple slices!



Featured Product of the Month

QUEST BARS

Now Available to Purchase at Capital Health Metabolic & Weight Loss Center!

Protein bars can be a great on-the-go small meal option before or after weight loss surgery when you did not plan a meal. Although it is a convenient back-up plan, there are few protein bars that we recommend because it is difficult to find one that is high in protein, low in fat and sugar and is under 200 calories. Quest Bars not only meet that criteria, but they are loaded with fiber and actually delicious! They come in a variety of flavors — most of which are available to purchase in our office. You can buy them for \$3 per bar (includes tax) or if you buy a box of 12 bars (\$32.83 including tax), the 12th bar is on us.