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Try a New Approach to Food in the New Year: Stop Dieting and Focus on Mindful Eating

“Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

— Albert Einstein

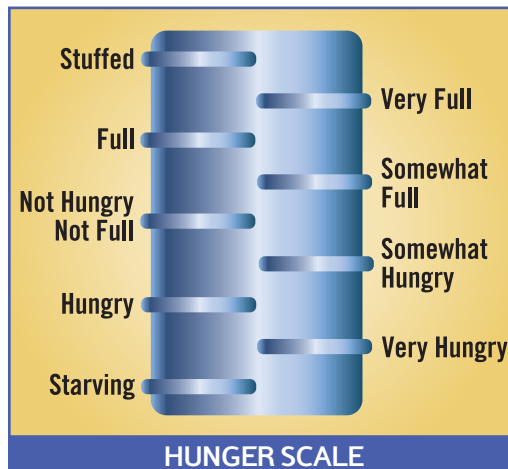
While the concept of restricting food intake for a specified period of time in order to shed excess pounds may seem perfectly rational, the great American pastime of dieting, especially fad diets is in reality frustrating, unsettling, and in most cases, doomed to fail. Clearly, another, and better way, is needed. We consulted with therapist and author Judith Matz, LCSW, who has dedicated her 25+ year career to helping those with eating and weight issues discover a different approach that brings both common sense and satisfaction back to their complex relationship with food. A powerful advocate for the ‘mindful eating’ movement, Judith shares its compelling tenets below.

Why do so many dieters find themselves in a never-ending struggle to lose weight and keep it off?

The dieting-overeating-weight regain cycle is almost inevitable, not because people fail diets but because diets fail people. It is important to understand that rebound overeating happens to almost everybody, and should not be viewed as an individual weakness or fault. The main reason diets do not work over the long term is they create deprivation and promote a loss of the internal signals for hunger and fullness that are necessary for normal eating. In fact, dieting sets in motion physiological and psychological factors that actually trigger overeating.

How does mindful eating address the dieter’s dilemma?

Mindful eating begins when you ask: Do you know when you are hungry? Do you eat when you are hungry? Do you eat what you are hungry for? Do you



Did You Know?

33 – 66%

Percentage of dieters that regain more weight than they lost on their diets

stop when you are full? If you answered “yes,” you’re in tune with your body’s natural hunger signals. If you replied “no,” you may be out of touch with your true hunger needs.

How do you teach people to change their eating habits of a lifetime and adopt mindful eating?

It begins with learning how to identify your physical hunger. If you experience symptoms such as headaches, weakness, shakiness, irritability and lightheadedness, you may have waited too long to eat, and unfortunately, are now at high risk for overeating. Instead, look for an empty or gnawing feeling. The Hunger Scale above is a tool to help you evaluate your internal state. Ideally, you would stay in the range of ‘hungry’ to ‘full’ so you don’t become ravenous or stuffed. As you consistently ask yourself,

What is ‘mindful’ or ‘attuned’ eating?

Attuned eating teaches people to reconnect with their natural, inner signals that guide them as to when, what and how much to eat...literally bringing harmony into their relationship with food and allowing them to experience the real joy of eating. Mindfulness means bringing awareness to the experience without judgment or distraction. It is a transformative process that takes some time before people are able to honor their natural cues for hunger and satiety.



The Connected Patient: Keeping Up with Apps

The ubiquitous smart phone has boosted its usefulness tenfold in the past decade with a mushrooming library of health and wellness apps. Some aim to help you monitor your condition day-to-day, understand and stay on track with medications, or diagnose your symptoms, while others prepare you for an unforeseen emergency, allow you to share information electronically with your physician or receive education and encouragement between doctor’s appointments. With almost 200,000 apps already on the market, the real challenge is identifying the treasures that are credible, accurate and can guide

you toward a healthier lifestyle. Some notable apps are listed below; all are available for iPhone (in iTunes store) and Android (Google Play).

Condition-specific information

Diabetes Tracker and **One Drop** offer comprehensive logging of glucose, food, medication and activity; **GluCoMo** works as an electronic diary to store data for blood sugar levels, weight, insulin intake, pulse rate, blood pressure and other information.

AsthmaSense and **AsthmaMD** provide tools to manage the disease with a digital record of triggers, medications and testing.

From the desk of Northern Virginia Family Practice

Dear Patient:

As a new year begins, our thoughts naturally turn to making our lives better...more satisfying, and of course, healthier. I hope *HealthWise* will arm you with the latest information to keep you feeling your best in 2017. If you have been curious about the growing world of smart phone apps and the benefits they bring, in this issue you will find an introduction to some worthwhile ones. We also look at how probiotics and prebiotics may help maintain intestinal health, and finally, provide insights from a lifelong advocate of the ‘mindful eating’ movement.

Wishing you a year of good health,

Northern Virginia Family Practice

“Am I hungry?” you will become better able to recognize your body’s needs.

The next step is deciding what to eat when you are physically hungry. When people eliminate categories of food in pursuit of weight loss, they frequently experience deprivation that ultimately leads to overeating the very foods they tried to avoid. Instead, think of what will truly satisfy you and supports your body as you make the match. Also take into consideration what will best support your body’s needs. For instance, those with high cholesterol might choose sorbet instead of ice cream if they are craving a cold, sweet snack. Consider not just taste, but feel — do you crave hot, cold, crunchy, smooth, salty, sweet, spicy, etc? If you eat what you are hungry for when you are hungry, you will find a moment when your stomach feels satisfied.

Is this process effective for most people?

Absolutely. The key is to be consistent and keep accumulating attuned eating experiences day in and day out.

Will I lose weight by becoming a mindful eater?

If weight loss occurs, it will be a side effect. However, I urge people to not use weight as a measure of success or failure. Health is so much more than just numbers on the scale, and a positive relationship with food along with a focus on physical activity, good sleep habits and regular medical care are much more important.

The **National Comprehensive Cancer Network Patient Guides for Cancer** covers 25 different types of cancer, with medical illustrations, information on screening, treatment and follow-up, and questions for patients to ask their physician.

A healthier lifestyle

MyFitnessPal Calorie Counter & Diet Tracker remains one of the best diet trackers, allowing you to log meals and weight data for an at-a-glance view of your intake on the dashboard.

(continued on page 2)



The Connected Patient: Keeping Up with Apps

Did You Know?

200,000: Estimated number of health and medical apps available

61%: Percentage of adults who have downloaded an mHealth (mobile health) app

(continued from page 1)

Nike+ Running and **Garmin Connect** lets you log distance, time and intensity of jogs and runs; **Endomondo** enables logging and sharing of information from walks, hikes and cycles; **Trails**, known as the 'ultimate walker's app,' provides topographical tracking of your strolls; and **7 Minute Workout** provides exercise timers, instructional videos and a personalized exercise plan.

Buddhify and **Omvana** offer guided meditation tracks, ranging from three minutes to an hour.

Deep Sleep with **Andrew Johnson** features step-by-step instructions to guide yourself into meditation and a restful sleep and **Sleep Cycle** provides easy-to-read graphs to help you make sense of your sleep patterns and wakes you when you will feel the least groggy.

Medication tracking

Drugs.com is an easy way to look up drug information, identify pills, check interactions with different drugs and foods and set up your own personal



medication records. A symptom checker powered by Harvard Health Publications is included with the app.

CareZone will curate a list of medications, dosages, and schedules directly from your photo library, enable you to share symptoms with your doctor, store insurance information and schedule reminders for upcoming appointments.

GoodRx shows current pricing for your prescriptions at nearby pharmacies.

Round Health and **Medisafe** make it easier to follow a medication regimen with reminders on timing and dosage for each prescription, customized to your schedule.

Healthcare news

For information you can trust, check out **Medscape MedPulse**, a robust news aggregator for the world

of medicine and **UptoDate's** patient information section, featuring evidence-based, peer-reviewed information on hundreds of medical topics.

First aid

Download **First Aid by American Red Cross** to receive simple step-by-step instructions to guide you through everyday first aid scenarios, from asthma attacks to broken bones; there's a **Pet First Aid** app as well; and **Resuscitate! CPR AED & Choking**, developed by doctors and educators at the University of Washington, features short videos on how to perform CPR, operate commonly available Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and aid a choking victim.

New parents

BabyBump helps parents-to-be keep track of the stages of pregnancy, doctor's appointments, and share their news on social networks when baby arrives; **Sprout** offers 3D images of baby's growth by the week and advice on essential items needed for the newborn.

KidsDoc from the American Academy of Pediatrics offers expert advice to help parents make smart decisions on level of care needed for their child's illness or injury.

Please remember: an app, no matter how sophisticated or technologically advanced, cannot replace a phone call or visit to your personal physician.

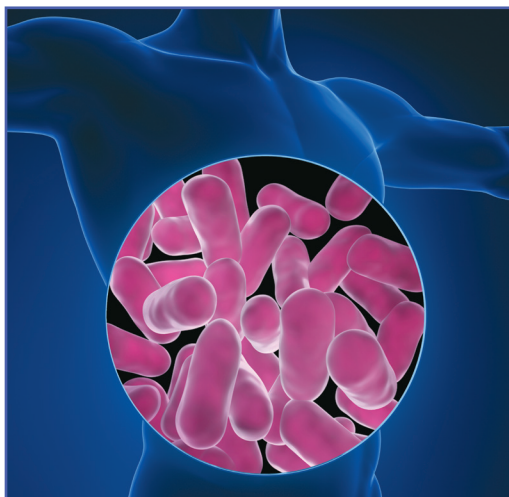
Sources: Digitaltrends.com, Harvard Health, imedicalapps.com

Gut Instincts: Can More Bacteria Mean Better Health?

Healthy bacteria may seem like a contradiction in terms, but years of research and real world experience point toward an unexpectedly promising finding: the microorganisms continually forming in your intestine may confer health benefits that we are only just beginning to understand.

Here is what we know: each of us has an individual set of microbes, collectively known as the microbiome, from the moment we are born, starting with our mother's bacteria and then continuing to gather new microbes throughout our life as a result of environmental influences. Among these are probiotics, needed and beneficial bacteria which support the bacteria that live within us. Their numbers can become challenged by factors that include antibiotics, poor diet or travel. Scientific investigators are finding their impact on overall health can be significant. The chemicals they emit may interfere with the way food is digested, medicine is deployed, and even how a disease progresses, according to experts.

Research in the last decade on manipulating the microbes within has been varied and extensive, involving antibiotics, probiotics and prebiotics (dietary fibers that promote the growth and metabolic activity of beneficial bacteria, including probiotics). The results of numerous studies suggest that certain types of probiotics may play a potential role in reducing gastrointestinal illnesses, including inflammatory bowel diseases, antibiotic-related and infectious diarrhea and irritable bowel syndrome. Additionally, the benefits of probiotics may extend into enhancing immune function. The idea that probiotics can improve the ability to fight off colds, promote a healthy urinary tract, reduce the risk of eczema, allergies and possibly Parkinson's disease,



in preliminary studies, has gained traction with nutritionists and gastrointestinal physicians alike.

As with all touted healthcare advancements, however, a note of caution should be sounded.

According to the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) Institute, adding probiotics to your diet, especially in the form of a supplement, should only be done in consultation with your physician. Some probiotics may not be appropriate for seniors, others may interfere with or interact with medication. Not all strains are the same, and while a specific kind of *Lactobacillus* may help prevent an illness, that doesn't necessarily mean that another kind of *Lactobacillus* would have the same effect or that *Bifidobacterium* probiotics would work. The same advice applies to adding prebiotic supplements to your diet. Although a great deal of research has been done, much remains to be learned. The encouraging news: gaining a comprehensive picture

Did You Know?

100 trillion: Number of bacterial cells in the human digestive tract

Source: International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics

of the microbiome is a matter of intense interest to the medical community, and will be further advanced in 2017 by programs such as the government-funded \$121 million National Microbiome Initiative.

The best approach now? To promote intestinal health, make sure your diet includes foods that are good sources of fiber, prebiotics and probiotics:

- ◆ **Fiber:** Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts
- ◆ **Prebiotics:** Oats, flaxseed, onions, garlic, chicory root, Jerusalem artichokes, bananas and greens
- ◆ **Probiotics:** Yogurt, buttermilk, kefir, soft cheeses, sauerkraut, and other fermented foods like kombucha



Step Out with Dr. Beauvais

Taking the first step may be the hardest part, but a 'Walk with the Doc' at Fort Ward Park provides the perfect impetus. Last fall, a growing group joined Dr. Beauvais monthly for a brisk stroll and relaxed conversation.

We'll continue down this healthy path in 2017. Join us: Jan. 27, Feb. 24 and Mar. 24.