

Controlling Hunger: Not So Hungry After All?

By Benjamin E. Bronheim, M.D.

We think we eat because we are hungry. Hunger may be defined as discomfort, weakness or pain caused by prolonged lack of food. As affluent inhabitants of a land of plenty, we rarely experience true physical hunger. What is the “hunger” that leads to overeating?

Perhaps another definition would be useful. Hunger is a craving, a desire, not for the taste or smells of food, but rather a craving to get the effects that we have learned from early childhood. Overeating is an attempt to change our emotional state; often it is intended to dull our emotional pain and discomfort.

No one likes to feel this emotional stress. It takes many forms—anxiety, anger, hurt, emotional emptiness, over-stimulation or loneliness among them. And it is good when we understand that being overwhelmed by those feelings is a sign that we need to take steps to change our lives and lighten the burden. We recognize the importance of lessening the stressors where we can, but also modifying our internal reaction to the things that bring about the stress.

Life is full of bumps for all of us—we all will experience strong negative feelings at various times. Yet we have been made to believe that we should be able to eliminate all unpleasantness from our lives. How often do you walk into a room and someone complains about how cold or hot or humid



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it is? Or how dark or light it is, how the air smells, the noise level, etc. We have amazing control over our environment, and if we find ourselves

not in control, it upsets us.

The same is true for our emotional states. We can drink alcohol, go shopping, gamble or play on the Internet at all hours, take a host of medications to change our state—or overeat. We often believe we must be in control and feel in control. When people start a diet, they begin to feel things they haven't felt for a long time. If we dull those feelings, we take the zest out of life. So, while it is important to learn to lower our personal stresses, we also have to learn

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Fitting Fitness Into Your Busy Day Is Well Worth The Time And Effort

By Roxanne Orxin, B.S.

We all know that exercise is important, but in our increasingly hectic lives, it's not always easy to work it into your busy schedule. It's often difficult getting motivated or you may not know where to start. Or maybe you really are committed to doing it, but just can't seem to find enough time during the day.

In searching for a solution, it may

be helpful to understand *why* exercise is so important. There are many health benefits associated with exercise; it can help fight disease and help you avoid aches and pains. For example, some easy stretching can alleviate the effects of arthritis. The impact of movement can delay the onset of osteoporosis. And exercise has been proven to lower your risk for

See *Even When*, page 4

Managing Your Weight During The Lazy Days Of Summer

Summertime is almost as difficult as the winter holiday season for managing your weight. Here are some tips on dealing with the picnics and “vacation vices” that can undermine even the most dedicated weight control participant:

1 | Focus on your food. Always make eating a separate activity. Don't eat while you're playing frisbee on the beach, sight-seeing around the monuments or washing your car. You'll enjoy the food more if you pay attention to it and you'll make better choices when it's not an incidental activity.

2 | Don't leave your discipline at home. Leaving your everyday cares behind when you go on vacation does not change the need to make good food choices when you're away from home. Wherever your travels take you, it's a great time of year to enjoy “in season” fruits and vegetables.

3 | See the light—and put it to good use. The extra daylight can help you establish exercise patterns that can be adapted into year-round activities. An afternoon at the pool is hardly strenuous exercise; use your leisure activities to reinforce your determination to exercise.

4 | It's summertime—no need to dress up (those burgers). This is a particularly critical time of year to pay attention to all the “junk” you put on your hamburger or hot dog. Ditto for the barbecue sauce and the chip dip; they may be tasty, but

they can wreak havoc with your daily calorie counts.

5 | Let the ants eat the leftovers. It's okay to have leftovers, but no matter what your mother said, there's no law requiring you to clean your plate. If it offends you to waste food, give what's left to the pigeons and next time put less on your plate.



6 | Watch what you eat—no one else cares. There are no food monitors at the company picnic, the beach or the ballgame. Nobody is keeping score of how much or what you put on your plate; your eating decisions are your own business and nobody else's.

7 | No one, except your spouse, cares what you drink. There is no obligation to drink alcohol simply because it's a social gathering. Alcohol is loaded with calories and it can destroy your good judgment, your careful driving record and the boss' image of you as a sensible person.

8 | On the other hand, load up on liquids. Summer is a good time to drink plenty of (non-caloric) liquids, particularly if it's hot or you're sweating or in the sun. There's a good chance you're not getting enough liquids in the summer and there are plenty of calorie-free drinks that are just as refreshing as the calorie kind.

9 | You pay a price for free food. It can be costly to load up on free food and expect to “make up for it” by eating carefully tomorrow. The food you eat at the picnic gets stored as real fat and the truth is that tomorrow will be as tough as yesterday when it comes to making good food choices.

10 | Bounce back from that picnic pitfall. Recover quickly. Don't wait until Monday. Weigh yourself to see where you are and deal with it now. Assume certain summertime activities will be difficult. Bank calories in advance or make specific plans to deal with it promptly if you plan to “relax” your normal eating routine.

11 | Right or wrong, write it down. Keep a record of what you've eaten even if it's awful. It doesn't have to take a lot of time and you don't have to make all the calorie calculations. But write everything down. It's the best way to focus your attention and to induce you to deal with it sooner when it's more likely to be manageable.

Understanding And Controlling Your Food Cravings Continued from page 1

to accept them and feel more comfortable with them.

In the last issue of *Weight Management News* (Winter 2006-07/Volume 14, No. 2), I wrote about mindfulness, an approach in which we learn to attend to the moment, accepting and welcoming whatever exists, whether it is pain, stress, frustration, disappointment or whatever. By learning to focus on our internal states in a non-critical curious manner, we can learn more about ourselves—and how to live within ourselves. We learn

the truth that life is complicated and that we are often not in control. Rather than being numb and feeling disconnected, we become more comfortable with who we are. This is something that many of our groups are designed to help you understand and accept.

So, the next time you experience some strong food cravings (“hunger”), stop and concentrate on what you feel within yourself and what happens as you don't dull it. See what feelings and thoughts develop and

stay with them. If you feel angry or hurt, stay with it and paradoxically you often begin to feel more comfortable with your cravings than you were before with the numbness. This leads to better decision making. You actually begin to feel more in control when you don't have to run away from what you can't control. This is a long process, not a one-time exercise, but if you learn to do this, it can take you on a new life direction and adventure. We will be glad to help you get there.

BOOK REVIEW

Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think

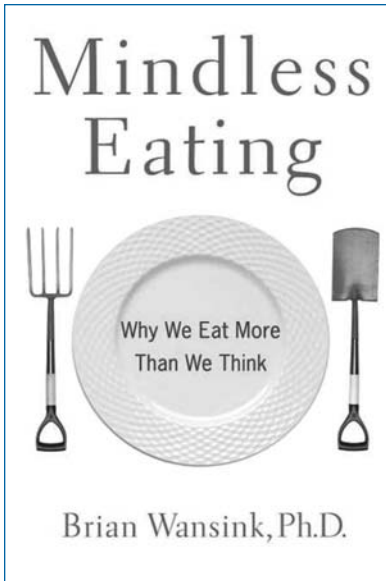
Brian Wansink, Ph.D.

Reviewed by Nicole V. Brown, M.S.,
R.D., L.D., HFI

Dr. Wansink has spent his career studying the hidden cues that determine how much—and why—people eat. His book, *Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think*, teaches us to recognize “hidden persuaders” used by restaurants and supermarkets to get us to mindlessly eat, and how can we use the “mindless margin” to lose—instead of gain—weight.

The average person makes well over 200 food decisions in a single day. These include the obvious such as “breakfast or no breakfast?” and “what to eat for dinner?,” plus more subtle choices such as whether to dip into the candy dish as you walk by it. Mindless eating concerns the invisible factors in our environment that can influence our food and beverage intake to the point that we are unaware of the calories we are consuming. By “re-engineering” our environment, we are able to mindlessly eat better and use several strategies to actually support weight loss or weight loss maintenance.

Some of these invisible factors that can influence weight include family and friends, packages and plates, distractions and distances, and cupboards and containers. In his book, Dr. Wansink offers 10 tips to help manage eating. The placement of food items (e.g., back of the refrigerator or in the cupboard, candy dish at work at least six feet away) and the types of



storage container they are in (aluminum foil instead of clear) create “pause points” which help us regulate if and how much we might eat of a particular item.

When there is some sort of indicator or barrier, human beings respond and eat less. In the Red Chip studies, specific Pringles potato chips were colored

red while one container had only the original uncolored chips. A hidden video camera was set up and people were invited to help themselves. Those who ate from cans with every seventh chip colored red ate an

average of 10 chips (approx. 100 calories). Those who were eating out of the cans with every 14th chip colored red ate 15 (150 calories). The final group (with access to only the plain chips) ate 23 chips (230 calories). The red colored chips were considered to be

“pause points.” Over the course of a year, a daily Pringles eater could save 130 calories a day and lose 13 lbs. by portioning 10 chips vs. eating directly out of the can.

When eating in groups of four or eight, light eaters eat more and the heavy eaters eat less. Those results are influenced by something Dr. Wansink calls the “power of norms.” If the norm of a group is to eat three pieces each, you, who planned to eat just one, would find yourself starting to work on a second piece. As a heavy eater, your norm might be six pieces of pizza, but when you find yourself in the group whose members are eating three pieces, studies show you most likely will slow down and eat only five.

The Mindless Margin is “the zone in which we can either slightly overeat or slightly undereat without being aware of it.” The calorie range is 100-300 calories, which Dr. Wansink calls the “mindless margin.” Consider a 200 calorie/day difference translates into a 20-pound gain or loss in a year. If you’ve begun to lose weight, you may have made progress by eliminating the 2-3 oz. of cheddar cheese (200-300 calories) you carve off the block after work or the 12-24 ounces of cola (150-300 calories) you used to drink each day. If you’ve lost weight and are in maintenance, keep an eye out for the mindless margin to avoid gradually regaining your lost weight.

This book is recommended reading for all as it presents insight into influences that affect our daily intake and strategic steps we can take to manage our weight. To secure additional information, readers should check original sources cited in the back of the book.



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Farewell To Claire LeBrun: A Dozen Years Of Thanks

Nutritionist Claire LeBrun has been a good friend and a valuable resource to the GWUWMP for the past 12 years. She recently left our program for a full-time job at the George Washington University Medical Center where she is now the coordinator for the nutritional and dietetic services for the bariatric surgery program.

Certainly we will miss Claire, her perspective, judgment and thoughtfulness. On the other hand, we appreciate the value of her new position, bringing



her years of experience to provide some much-needed support for surgical patients.

Claire has been a great source of nutritional wisdom for us all—organizing the nutrition classes, balancing the nutritional adequacy of our supplements, exploring new ways of doing it better (the protein bars are just one example) and developing new skills among our staff of dietitians. We will miss her and wish her well.

— Arthur Frank, M.D.

Even When You're Away, There's A Way To Exercise

Continued from page 1

heart disease and some cancers.

Your flexibility, strength and stamina will improve with exercise, which is beneficial for every aspect of life. Exercise, even a little, can improve your mood significantly. You will feel more comfortable in your body, and your body will appreciate it. It is even possible that exercise will help your brain produce some of those “feel good” chemicals.

Now comes the biggest benefit of all—exercise helps with weight loss. When you exercise, you are burning extra calories; the faster your heart is pumping, the more calories you burn. When your muscles are larger, they will burn more calories even when you're not exercising. If you increase your heart rate during exercise, your body will continue to burn extra calories for several hours *after* your workout. How great is that!

So, it's clear that exercise is something you should do, but it's not as simple as just putting it on your PDA or writing the words on your daytimer. It is increasingly difficult to fit it into your busy schedule. Keep in mind, however, that not all of the exercise you do in a day has to be at the gym or in your workout room at home.

Here are tips for fitting fitness in:

- **Take the stairs!** Walking up and down stairs is a quick and easy way to get your heart rate going, plus you'll be strengthening your legs. If you work on the 8th floor, try taking the elevator to 6 and walking the rest of the way.
- **Appreciate the parking lot.** Save time and reduce stress by parking farther away. Use the time you save looking for that prized spot and walk that extra distance to get some steps in.



- **Try a little wake-up walk.** If you feel yourself fading at your desk, take a brisk walk every few hours around your building to get a little exercise and wake yourself up.
- **Play fun music!** Make a pumped-up mix to play during your daily routines (getting ready for work, doing dishes, folding laundry). No one's watching, so go ahead and groove. It may also improve your mood!

Exercise has always been one of the most important elements of our program—and the friendly folks who run the fitness facility (Suite 300) are at your disposal. We are open during hours that are conveniently scheduled around groups and appointments and we would love to talk to you about a fitness program that's right for you. Exercise does not have to be painful, intimidating or unpleasant. It can be fun and make you feel and look great.

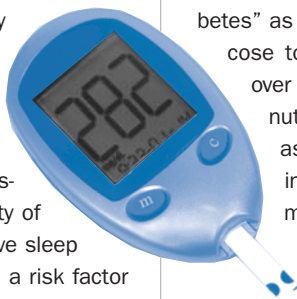
Try coming in 15 minutes early or staying 15 minutes after a group for a walk on the treadmill. Purchase a pedometer and ask a trainer to help you set it up. We understand it's hard to fit fitness into your day, but once you do it, you may just get hooked. So come visit us, ask as many questions as you like—and start moving!



Sleep Apnea And Diabetes

New Study Suggests Increased Risk

Previous sleep apnea studies have shown a risk for sleep deprivation and the risk of developing insulin resistance and diabetes. A new study from the Yale Center of Sleep Medicine, which for five years evaluated over 500 patients without any history of diabetes, suggests that persons with obstructive sleep apnea are at a 2.7 fold risk of developing diabetes, with the risk increasing according to the severity of the sleep apnea. Obstructive sleep apnea is also known to be a risk factor for heart disease, high blood pressure and stroke. This study suggests an additional risk for the development of diabetes although it is possible that treating sleep



apnea may decrease the development of diabetes and its complications. All diabetics should consider getting screened for sleep apnea.

Motivational Interviewing

Counselor Meeting Helps Weight Loss

A recent weight loss study of 217 diabetic women found that those participants who met with a counselor achieved more weight loss compared to those women who did not. All the subjects participated in regular group meetings, and received dietary guidance and exercise recommendations. Half of the study subjects were randomly assigned to meet with a counselor to discuss and work with any potential conflicts to making the lifestyle changes. This process, which is called motivational interviewing, helps a person “make their own arguments” to help overcome obstacles to change. At 18 months, those people who worked with the counselor were able to lose twice as much weight as those who did not meet with the counselor.

Development Of Diabetes

Lifestyle Changes Found Beneficial

International researchers recently studied the effects of a lifestyle intervention program on the development of diabetes in persons identified with “pre-diabetes” as diagnosed by a two-hour glucose tolerance test. This study of over 500 patients consisted of 20 nutritional counseling sessions as well as individualized training sessions focused on implementing changes in lifestyle. Half of the subjects received the individualized help and the others were given general information (verbal and written) about diet and exercise. The subjects actively participated in the intervention program

for three years, but were followed for a period of seven years to monitor the development of diabetes. During the three years of intervention, members of the group that received individualized instruction were able to achieve a lower mean body weight, increase fiber, lower fat intake and be more physically active compared to the control group that only received general information. At the seven-year mark, 4.3% of the intervention group developed diabetes compared to 7.4% of the control group. The lifestyle intervention program helped prevent the development of type 2 diabetes for at least three years after the program was stopped, making clear the benefits of implementing lifestyle changes.

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR RESEARCH STUDIES

Many patients have expressed interest in being informed of the research opportunities in our program. We will soon be enrolling volunteers for two separate research studies. Subjects must be over 18 years of age and have a BMI over 30 (moderately overweight) with normal or controlled blood pressure. Criteria for inclusion and exclusion vary for each study. The studies provide physical examinations, laboratory tests, close medical supervision and dietary and behavioral intervention at no cost.

If you are interested, please call 202-223-3077 to discuss the specific study requirements.

Weight Management

NEWS

IS PUBLISHED BY

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
SUITE 208 THREE WASHINGTON CIRCLE, N.W. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20037
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NEWS & NOTES

Arthur Frank, M.D. was the speaker at Grand Rounds for the Department of Medicine at George Washington University and at Lakewood

Hospital in Cleveland. He spoke about organizing an obesity program at a conference of the Centers for Obesity Research and Education and about the medical management of the bariatric (weight loss) surgery patient at the Virginia section of the American College of Physicians.

Domenica Rubino, M.D. presented results from an NIH study in a poster presentation entitled *Diabetes, Metabolic Syndrome, Cortisol Dynamics and Perceived Stress Do Not Impede Maintenance of Weight Loss* at the Endocrine Society in Toronto in May. She and **Sheila Ramsey, Ph.D., M.S.W.** will be submitting the manuscript for publication. Dr. Rubino was also asked to join the Obesity Management Adverse Event Advisory Committee for Medtronic, Inc.

Deanie Jennings, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.-C. attended the 18th International Conference on the Psychology of Health, Immunity and Disease sponsored by the National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine. Intensive Training Institutes included "Reversing the Effects of Trauma" and "The Link between Stress, Inflammation and Weight Gain." Among the notable classes were: Adrenal Fatigue, A 21st Century Stress Syndrome; The Courage To Change; Breaking the Bonds of Fear; Depression And How Suffering Begins The Journey To

Wisdom; and Attunement To the True Self. These and other themes rooted in the Mind/Body Medicine field form the basis for our practices in the Stress Management Group offered Wednesdays at 6 p.m.

Claire LeBrun, M.P.H., R.D., who was the GWUWMP Nutrition Director, has accepted a fulltime Senior Nutritionist position with GW University's Medical Faculty Associates to start up the Bariatric program. She will be seeing patients (on an outpatient basis) of several surgeons (Paul Lin, Juliet Lee and Fred Brody) who do weight loss surgery as well as for surgeons of their Gastroenterology Dept. in the Ambulatory Care Center. (see related story on page 4.)

Kathy McFalls, M.S., R.D., L.D. is the new Nutrition Director for GWUWMP. She is a registered dietitian and nutrition educator who received her undergraduate degree in dietetics and her graduate degree in community nutrition from the University of Maryland. Previously, she worked for the Department of Medicine at Georgetown University as an ambulatory care nutritionist. For the last nine years, Ms. McFalls has been providing nutrition education and counseling to patients in our research studies. She will now be seeing patients in clinic Thursday mornings.

Bill Picon, Ph.D. has launched a "Men's Group" on Saturday mornings from 10–11:30 a.m., the format of which allows the discussion to focus on topics that are more gender specific. This group will be structured so that the first three of the four weekly sessions will begin with a lecture or

presentation followed by a discussion period. The final session will be devoted to processing issues presented by group members. Membership can be arranged by contacting Dr. Picon at 301-652-6629 or leaving word for him at the front desk. This is not a "drop in" group.

Roxanne Orkin will receive her B.S. in Exercise Science from GW next month. She is certified in pilates and yoga, and has taught both for us on Wednesdays and Saturdays and helped with our patient incentive program. We will, however, be saying goodbye to her as she moves to New York City.

Rebecca Mohning, M.S., R.D., L.D., a registered Dietitian/Exercise Physiologist and the GWUWMP Fitness Director, wants to tell everyone that the **fitness center is now open every Friday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.** Stop in before or after your appointment to exercise, get your fitness questions answered or have your pedometer calibrated.

Kathy B. Glazer, M.S., R.D., L.D. participated in a Health Fair for the Ostomy Support Group of Northern Virginia at Inova Fairfax Hospital in May. She has been invited to give a speech to the group early next year.

Parking rates at our building have gone up. In an effort to reduce your parking costs, we have arranged for patients to pick up a validation slip at the front desk. We have also prepared a list of other parking lots in the area, which is available in the lobby.

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