



## Conscious Eating

One of my biggest hurdles in maintaining a healthy diet is... sleep-eating. Ok, no, I don't walk to my refrigerator during my third REM cycle and comatosely gorge myself on 3 pieces of pizza and a pint of Haagen Dazs. I might as well, though. You know the scenario:

You've had a long day at work and all you want to do is relax and catch up on your Tivo'd recordings of your favorite program. You grab something quick to eat: maybe some left over Chinese food or a Hot Pocket. Two hours later you look down, and you see not only the remains of your dinner, but an empty bag of potato chips, 5 Hershey Kisses foils, and 2 or 3 empty Bud Light bottles. You think to yourself, "Wow, that can't possibly be *all* mine. There's no way I ate *that* much!"

Oh, but my friend, you did. I've done it; most people have unwittingly overeaten and experienced the combination of surprise and guilt at their gluttony. I don't possess the miracle panacea to eliminate the all too common binge eating epidemic. However, I have three tips that may help you prevent, or at the very least decrease those couch potato tendencies that pack on the pounds.

### **1. Lead yourself not into temptation.**

I'm guessing that bag of bite size Snickers or box of doughnuts didn't make their way to your pantry without your knowledge or consent. The best way to avoid eating unhealthy foods is by not having them within a 4 yard jaunt. Keep your refrigerator stocked with fresh fruits and vegetables, and healthy low cal snacks like fat free yogurt or reduced fat cottage cheese. The sugar laden, high calorie treats won't seem as important when they require a 5 mile drive to the grocery store.

### **2. Keep a food diary.**

Cliché as it may sound, food diaries are an excellent idea. The main reason most people eat so much is because they don't even realize they're doing it. A food journal requires you to be conscious of what is going into your body. Try it for one week. Write down:

Date   Food   # of Calories   Fat (g)   Carb (g)   Reason for eating

You will be surprised at just how much you pop into your mouth without even knowing it. Diet transgressions are also tougher to commit when you have to write your mistakes down, causing you to think twice before that midmorning Twinkie.

### **3. If you're going to splurge, make sure you enjoy it.**

Every time I feed my Chihuahuas, they practically inhale their dinners. It wouldn't matter if it were kibbles or filet mignon, they wouldn't know the difference. I look at my pets and wonder, "What's the point, if they aren't even going to enjoy it?" The same applies for us humans. So many times we'll gulp down our quarter pounder meals in a hurry, without so much as a thought to how it tastes or its texture. Why not save the high calorie, sinful foods for a time when you can appreciate the experience. Instead of having a nightly beer or two, stick to water, or low cal beverages during the week, and save up for a martini out with the girls, or a beer with the guys during the playoff game. For all intensive purposes, when you are thoughtlessly eating, you might as well put healthy food in your body, and save the bad stuff for a time you can at least enjoy your guilty pleasure.

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