



Mindless Eating-Why We Eat More Than We Think

Most of us enjoy eating, but we sometimes overeat not because of hunger, but because of family and friends, packages and plates, names and numbers, labels and lights, colors and candles, shapes and smells, distractions and distances, cupboards and containers. The list is endless. We are usually unaware this is happening to us until it is too late. We do know this overeating can contribute to our community's growing obesity rates. See if any of these scenarios sound familiar to you....

The Curse of the Warehouse Club

We all like going to the big clubs to stock up on our favorite foods. But large portions and amounts can lead to eating a lot more than we need. Follow these tips to stop us from eating the entire tub of crackers in two sittings.

- Repackage jumbo sizes into smaller bags and plastic containers.
- Hide the extras-if you buy 144 packs of microwave popcorn, put a few in the cupboard and pack the rest far away, such as the basement.
- Reseal packages-use tape to close a bag of chips instead of a chip clip, tape is much harder to get into.

Restaurant Rules

- If the breadbasket is on the table you will eat it-ask the waiter to take it away or put it someplace you can't reach it
- Split an entrée, have half packed to take home, or order two appetizers.
- If you want dessert see if someone will share.
- Establish a pick two rule: appetizer, drink, dessert-pick any two.
- Soft music and candlelight can improve your enjoyment of a meal but they can also make you eat more if you linger, and prompt you to give in to the temptation of dessert or another drink.



Make Overeating a Hassle, Not a Habit

Leave serving dishes in the kitchen or on a sideboard-having them at least six feet away gives us a chance to ask if we're really that hungry. For salad and veggies, make sure they are visible in the "pick me" spot in the middle of the table.

"De-convenience" tempting food-take these and remove them from sight, put them in hard to reach cupboards. Reseal packages and wrap the tempting leftover in aluminum foil and put in the back of the refrigerator.

Snack only at the table and on a clean plate-this makes it less convenient to eat more.

The better idea would to not bring impulse foods into the house so eat before you shop, stick to a list, and shop the perimeter of the store.....that is where the fresh food hangs out.

Information for this newsletter was taken from the book "*Why We Eat More Than We Think-Mindless Eating*" by Dr. Brian Wansink. Dr. Wansink is the director of Cornell University's Food and Brand Lab and has been working with some of our local schools to help improve the school nutrition environment.