

What did we learn today about your habits that can improve and hinder your weight loss efforts?

STRENGTHS

- You have a strong support system that could be enlisted to help you with your weight loss efforts
- You like to exercise and are already engaged in regular exercise
- You have already made healthy changes to your diet
- You are knowledgeable about nutrition, food labels, etc.
- You like to try new food and are open to learning new recipes.

WEAKNESSES

- ***You don't like to exercise or have little experience with exercise***
Solution: Find physical activities that you enjoy. Exercise doesn't always have to take place at the gym. Tennis, dancing, and walking outside with your dog are good methods of exercise. If you walk, track your steps with a FitBit or pedometer; then you can assess whether your walking routine is meeting your weight loss goals.
- ***You consume high levels of carbohydrates***
Solution: Continue working with your dietician in identifying non-carbohydrate foods that you enjoy. Internet sites such as Pinterest offer good ideas on bariatric recipes. Everyone can change their taste buds, but it may take about 3-4 weeks of consistent eating habits to change your preferences.
- ***You have strong sugar cravings that sabotage your weight loss efforts***
Solution: Talk to the dietician about your cravings. Dieticians can prescribe methods for "detoxing" off sugar and also help identified healthy substitutes to satisfy your cravings.
- ***Your busy schedule hinders your abilities and plans to practice weight management strategies***
Solution: It is imperative that you prioritize your health in order to manage your weight. Use good time management strategies. Plan meals ahead. Pack your lunch the night before to bring to work. Buy healthy foods in pre-packaged snack bags for convenience. Use an alarm to remind you to stop and eat. You must find time to exercise, even if it includes three, 10-minute walks. Life will always be busy, so your only solution is to better manage your time, organize yourself, ask for help from your support group, and re-identify your priorities. Psychologists can help with time management skills, and setting limits on activities that interfere with your weight loss efforts.
- ***You live in a household with trigger foods that sabotage your weight loss efforts***
Solution: Clean out your pantry and get rid of trigger foods. Ask family to hide trigger foods in opaque boxes in the pantry so you can't see what's inside.

- ***You dine out frequently***

Solution: Cooking your own food is the best way to control what you eat. Restaurants often include more sugar, butter, and oils in food that you would not be adding if you did your own cooking. Studies also show that we over-eat when we dine out. The Bariatric diet does not often require complicated recipes. Talk to the dietician or use online resources to find some, simple bariatric recipes. It may take time to learn new recipes but it will get easier and faster overtime. Talk to your family about selecting restaurants where there are healthier options.

- ***You have trouble controlling the amount of food you eat.***

Solution: Most individuals improve their self-control over food when they reduce portions and eat smaller, more frequent meals. You may find that once you consistently follow 5-6 daily meal plan per day, you will feel more satisfied eating less at each meal. Talk to a bariatric psychologist if you struggle with binge eating, as there are possible medications that can help with this. After surgery, you will likely lose your appetite for a few months and will therefore, feel more satisfied with less food. Keep consistent with measuring portions, so that overtime when your appetite returns you do not unknowingly begin overeating again.

- ***Many of your recreation or social events include food***

Solution: A difficult but necessary behavioral change often includes finding new hobbies and recreational events that do not revolve around food. Sometimes you need to talk to your friends and family about changing activities to reduce the emphasis on food, and promote more physical activity. Changes in friendship sometimes occur here, but may be necessary when your health is at stake.

- ***You don't like healthy food***

Solution: You need to learn to like healthy food. You will need to remain open-minded, and try many different foods. Taste buds can change over a 3-4 week period. You just have to stick with food changes, and then eating new foods will feel more comfortable for you.