Social Pressures

Eating low-fat would be far easier if we lived on deserted islands. Think of it...limited food choices, plenty of time on our hands, no one insisting that we eat their homemade cheesecake. Yes, things would be easier. But the reality is, we live in a world full of tempting, high-fat choices, special occasions, disrupted routines, and well-meaning friends and family members who push food. Socializing certainly brings challenges, but you don't need to be a hermit to stick with your WHI eating plan. With planning and self-monitoring, you can handle most social situations.

Some Dietary Change participants think social eating situations happen so rarely that there's no need to plan for them: "I follow the plan most of the time, so it's O.K. to eat what I want when I'm with friends or family." However, we tend to be in these hard-to-manage situations a lot more than we realize: holidays, special occasions (birthdays, graduations, weddings, funerals, reunions), frequent gatherings (bridge groups, clubs, church and synagogue socials, restaurant outings, senior center events), and travel (cruises, family visits, RV traveling, weekend trips). Social eating situations do occur frequently, so we should be prepared to successfully deal with them.

Fortunately, many people watch their diets now, but even so—some still prepare higher-fat food for guests as a treat. As one participant notes, "People are the ones that can get you in trouble. Here you are, trying to use your healthy strategies and sometimes they tempt you. They come up and say, 'Have you tried my so and so?' Sometimes, their dish looks so good that you're just going to taste a little bit." Having a little bit of something is a good strategy, as long as your "little bits" don't get out of hand.

Here are some tried-and-true ways to deal with challenging eating situations:

- Bring something low-fat to a party so you know you'll have something acceptable to eat.
- Don't arrive hungry; eat something low-fat and filling before you go.
- Plan ahead for these times by eating less fat before and/or after the special occasion.
- Stay away from the food table.
- Seek out fresh fruits and vegetables and bread or rolls.
- In a restaurant, ask the waiter to have something prepared differently ("Can I get that fish broiled?") or "Could I get a green salad instead of fries with my meal?").
- Take a single bite of something tempting to satisfy your cravings. Or if you're being pressured to try something, ask for just a small amount.
- Practice your low-fat eating "script." Politely saying, "No, thank you," "I'm sorry, but I'm too full," or "I'm afraid my stomach can't handle that" is very acceptable.

Continued on page 4
Rhode Island Participant Takes the Cake

Charlotte Richardson’s philosophy is simple: when you’ve had a good life, it’s important to give something back. It’s hard to know which came first—the good life or the service—for this longtime Rhode Island resident, as they’re intertwined throughout her years.

When her four daughters were young, she was busy volunteering at their school and helping with everything from Brownies to 4-H Clubs. She later served 10 years on the Jamestown, Rhode Island, Town Council (four years as the Council vice-president). She retired in 1992 as the finance director of a non-profit community action agency. Since “retiring,” Charlotte has served on the local Housing Board and helped create a senior center in her town; the center provides activities, meals, and education for its members. She’s also worked on a statewide program called “Women To Women,” which promotes breast cancer prevention activities (such as mammograms) to uninsured and underinsured women. Most recently, she joined a WHI Dietary Change group at the Pawtucket Clinical Center.

It was no surprise to anyone except the ever-humble Charlotte when she was given a “Woman of Achievement” award in 1997 by the Business and Professional Women’s Club of Rhode Island. Competing with other notable women in her state, Charlotte thought, “There’s no way I’ll get this award. These other women have done wonderful things... when they called my name, I almost fell to the ground!”

Charlotte’s ability to get things done serves her well in WHI. She works hard to attend sessions, meet her fat gram goal, and self-monitor frequently. “I try to keep my dietary records a lot of the time,” she says. “Otherwise, you might think you know what you are all day, but you really don’t. It’s a commitment and I tend to [self-monitor] more than I have to.”

Her busy life presents some eating challenges. “At home, I have no problem. My motto is, ‘If I don’t buy it, I won’t try it.’ But,” says Charlotte, “when I visit someone or we have a function at the senior center which involves dessert, it’s tough. My friends are supportive, but you can’t expect them to change their diets to suit me. It’s when they sneak up on me with a yummy cake that I melt! I’m getting better, though. I’ve learned to take a little dessert to shut off my taste buds and not eat as much as I normally would.”

Charlotte also struggles to meet her grain goal. “I’ve been conditioned all of my life to avoid bread because it’s fattening. Now I know that it’s not, but it’s still—pardon the pun—in-grained in me,” she says. Charlotte often eats a bowl of cereal with skim milk at night if she hasn’t gotten enough grains during the day, and she bought a bread machine so she can bake her own bread and control what goes in it.

She’s grateful for her family’s support: “When we have dinner together, I take charge and tell them they’re all eating low-fat and that’s that! I have one granddaughter who’s a vegetarian so we go that route, too.” Charlotte says her children are “tickled pink” about her involvement in WHI. One daughter even made her a non-fat cake for her last birthday.

Charlotte really enjoys her Dietary Change group. “Our group has looked at these changes as a challenge,” she notes, “so everybody helps everybody.” Her advice to other participants? “If you slip, it’s not a sin, so just start over again. Stick with it, because it’s for your own benefit.”
Spiced Pumpkin Bars

1 cup egg whites (from approximately 8 large eggs) or liquid egg substitute
1 cup unsweetened applesauce
1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
2 cups canned unsweetened pumpkin (see tip below)
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
Confectioners’ sugar, sifted

1. Preheat oven to 375° F.
2. Lightly spray a 12” x 18” x 1” pan with nonstick spray.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together the egg whites, applesauce, sugar, and pumpkin.
4. In a small bowl, sift or stir together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and spices.
5. Gently fold dry ingredients into the pumpkin mixture; do not overwork.
6. Spread mixture evenly in prepared pan.
7. Bake until firm to the touch and lightly browned, 20 to 25 minutes.
8. Cool, then slice into 24 bars. Dust lightly with confectioners’ sugar just before serving.

Tip: Be sure to buy unsweetened pumpkin and not prepared pumpkin filling. You can substitute 1 tablespoon pumpkin pie spice for the cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and cloves listed in the recipe.

Makes: 24 bars (serving size: 1 bar)
Fat: 0 grams per serving
Fruits/Vegetable Servings: 1/4 per serving
Grain Servings: 1/4 grain per serving
Recipe from: Everyday Cooking with Dr. Dean Ornish — HarperCollins Publishers 1996
Michigan Bean Soup

1 tablespoon margarine
1 cup chopped onion
8 ounces lean ham, cubed
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
24-ounce can navy beans, rinsed and drained
6 cups water
2 1/2 cups celery, chopped
1 1/2 cups carrots, diced
2 whole cloves
2 bay leaves
4 cups fat-free beef or chicken broth
1/4 teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoon cider vinegar

1. Saute onion, ham, and garlic powder in margarine over medium heat until onion is tender.

2. In a one-gallon stockpot, combine beans, sauteed mixture, and all other ingredients except vinegar.

3. Simmer for 20 minutes.

4. Remove bay leaves before serving. Add vinegar and serve.

This may be prepared and frozen for later thawing and reheating.

Makes: 8 one-cup servings
Fat: 4 grams per serving
Fruits/Vegetable Servings: 1 per serving
Grain Servings: 1 per serving
Recipe from: All American Low-Fat Meals in Minutes —DCI PUBLISHING INC., 1993
CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT

The women in this Nevada Clinical Center Dietary Change group received crowns as they “graduated” from their first year of intervention sessions. They are writing words of wisdom to new Dietary Change participants; the new attendees will read these letters after they receive their fat gram goals. This group’s attendance record is also inspirational to others; most of the women haven’t missed a single class!

(Pictured from left to right, left side of table: Pauline Smith, Barbara Stoddard, Dorothy Lazzarone, Betty McClelland, Ellen Quirk, Cari Villanueva. End of table: Rochelle Catlett. Left to right, right side of table: Marie Springer, Joyce Delano, Julie Demler, Phyllis Sweder.)

LOW-FAT BITES

- If high-fat foods deflate your holiday spirit, Year-Round Low-Fat & No-Fat Holiday Meals in Minutes will really give you something to celebrate. This cookbook has a bounty of time-saving recipes to help honor everything from New Year’s Day to Columbus Day. Who wouldn’t enjoy Pumpkin Poppy Seed Cake for Halloween, or Corned Beef and Cabbage and Potato Bread on St. Patrick’s Day? The book provides fun details about each holiday, as well as ideas for sharing the event with grandchildren or friends. Most of the recipes have 3 grams of fat per serving or less (M.J. Smith, Chronimed Publishing, $12.95).

- For a tasty winter fruit salad, mix diced apples with a few slivered almonds or chopped walnuts and low-fat or nonfat vanilla yogurt and cinnamon. Add raisins or dried cherries just before serving. Sweeten the salad with a little honey or brown sugar.

- Add flavor without adding fat with new canola oil-based Pam Garlic and Lemon Seasoning Sprays. The sprays can be used directly on foods before, during, or after cooking. Think of the possibilities... lemon chicken, garlic shrimp, zesty no-fry fries. A one-second spray has less than 1 gram of fat, which is a much better option than butter or oil. The 5-ounce cans sell for about $2.99.

- A bowl of hot cereal can take the chill off winter mornings, but plain oatmeal and cream of wheat can get tiresome. Check out the new line of Roman Meal Organic Multi-Grain Cereals and Cream of Rye Cereals. The multi-grain line contains oats, wheat, barley, rye, triticale, flaxseed, and wheat bran, in tasty flavors like Apple Cinnamon and Raisin Date-Nut. The rye cereal is available plain and with Oats & Barley and Raisin & Spice. They are good grain sources and are low in fat. All varieties are available both as regular-cooking and instant cereals. Find these cereals in natural food stores for about $2 for a 16-ounce container.

Correction: The fat grams per serving for the "Spicy Skillet Dinner" recipe that ran in the Fall 1998 (Vol. 9) newsletter are 4, not 1 gram as listed. We apologize for the error.
Social Pressures

Continued from page 1

Self-monitoring is one of the best ways to stay on track with your eating plan, even during busy, social times. If you write down what you’re eating, you’re more likely to stick with your fat gram goal and successfully budget when you’ve gone over. “Self-monitoring tends to keep me in line and not let me forget what I’ve eaten,” says one participant. Another notes, “It definitely takes time to do it, but trying to remember what I ate two or three days later is impossible.”

Some participants regularly record what they eat except on “bad” (high-fat) days. We’re human, after all, and we want to look “good,” both to ourselves and our nutritionist. However, we ARE what we EAT, so our bodies still process the fat grams we consume, even if we don’t write them down. The point of WHI Dietary Study is to look at the possible relationship between fat intake and cancer and heart disease. Your body “sees” and uses what you eat, so not writing it down doesn’t help you or the study.

Wouldn’t it be better to know just how “bad” some of your high-fat social situations are, than to ignore them? “When I don’t write it down, it’s because I’ve been grossly high,” reflects one participant. “So when I look back, I know what I’ve done when there’s nothing written down. You can do a lot of things and play little tricks, but you can’t fool yourself. In the end, you’re living with yourself day in and day out.”

There are a number of different tools you can use to keep track of what you eat. They can be WHI tools, like the Fat Scans, or tools designed by you. The Fall 1998 session introduced some new tools. Check with your group members or your nutritionist if you need some new ideas.

The people we love and the places we go can change our low-fat aims. When that happens, it’s not the end of the world. Learn from it and bring that knowledge to the next challenging situation. With planning and monitoring, you’ll stay on track—and life will be a lot more fun than on that deserted island.