

Over the last few articles, I have been discussing strategies for weight loss. If you missed any of this series or any other series, you can read the articles on our office web site: www.lifetouchclinics.com. Last week I discussed how to re-frame your interpretation of the sensation of hunger to make it easier to begin to restrict your calorie intake. There are other strategies that can also be effective.

Instead of skipping meals, as I discussed last week, try eating multiple smaller meals during the day. Eating multiple smaller meals has several advantages. First it helps to maintain a constant blood sugar level. Drops in blood sugar can stimulate the hunger sensation. Also, if you eat this way for a long enough period of time the stomach may shrink, so it will take less food to achieve a state of fullness. If you happen to sit down for a primary meal and you had eaten a small meal just an hour or so before hand, you will be less hungry and less inclined to over-indulge when more food is placed in front of you.

If you decide to eat this way, be sure and make your small meals as nutritious as possible. They should include protein as well as a small amount of fat. Try to minimize carbohydrates in these meals. Nuts, hard boiled eggs, veggies and some fruits are good choices. Nutrient shakes are also a good choice, just be sure to watch the carbs in them. Many of these products available in the grocery stores have a high amount of carbs. The carbs are often in the form of high fructose corn syrup, which tends to stimulate excessive insulin production which in turn promotes fat accumulation. There are better products available. We have some in our offices and you may be able to find them in health food stores.

Another strategy is to eat a light appetizer a half hour before your primary meal. This will raise the blood sugar about the time you are going to eat the primary meal and you will be less hungry. If you can't eat an appetizer, then eat your meal slowly to allow time for your first few bites to quiet down the hunger sensation. If you are eating out and you know the restaurant serves large portions, then ask for a to-go box at the beginning of the meal. As soon as your meal is served put some of it in the box, close it and set it aside.

All of these strategies need to become part of your lifestyle. As I said when I started this series, dieting can result in initial weight loss, but in the long run they have proven to cause even more weight gain. To permanently lose weight you have to permanently alter your lifestyle. Next week I will conclude this topic by discussing the role of exercise. It is a critical component to healthy weight loss.