



More is Less *By Joe Stein, President*



Many people believe the best way to lose weight is to eliminate one of their daily meals. Typically, it's either breakfast or lunch that is sacrificed on the altar of easy answers and quick fixes. With respect to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, less is *not* more when it comes to meal planning. Those who have eaten five smaller meals a day---breakfast, lunch, dinner, and two small snacks--have been successful in losing weight or maintaining their desired weight. Skipping a meal may seem like a way to reduce daily caloric intake, but nothing is farther from the truth. In fact, eating more frequent, smaller-portion meals can be an effective strategy when it comes to losing unwanted pounds.

Research has shown that spreading caloric intake throughout the day allows for more efficient metabolism. Most people can metabolize a maximum of approximately 900 calories at one meal. Anything more is stored as fat. In addition, if one skips breakfast, a signal is sent to the brain that you did not have a good day hunting or gathering, and your metabolic rate slows in order to prevent starvation.

The typical scenario of skipping breakfast, eating a light lunch (or no lunch,) and then consuming a 1500-calorie dinner is a formula for weight gain. Spreading the day's calories over three meals is a start in the right direction. Adding a small snack between breakfast and lunch, another between lunch and dinner is a superior strategy to prevent overeating at mealtimes. Do you remember when you were a kid and your mom told you not to eat before dinner because "...it will kill your appetite." The goal of thoughtful snacking is not to kill your appetite, but to bruise it a little so you will eat a little less at the next meal. A snack with a calorie count between 100 and 150 can save more than twice that at the next meal. Meal portions are easier to control when you're not overly hungry.

What makes a good snack? Food that is filling, low to moderate in calories, fun to eat and satisfies your yen at the time. Think before you snack! If you crave salt, an ounce of pretzels is a good choice. Something spicy...wasabe peas are great. Both offer great zing and crunch factor for about 120 calories per serving. What about chocolate? Junior Mints are ten calories each. Five Chocolate Creme Mini Oreos are a treat at 98 calories a serving. If you are willing to take a walk on the wild side, fruits and vegetables are even lower in calories and higher in fiber than most processed foods. Portion controlled "dipping veggies" and pre-sliced fruit are available in many convenience stores.

Now that you have a better understanding of how the metabolism works, actively attempt to eat with thoughtfulness. Three meals and two snacks a day may seem like overeating, but in this case more is less. Sorry Ludwig.

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