

WHAT'S GOOD TO EAT?!



San Francisco Free Clinic * Nutrition Newsletter
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Nutrition Matters

What Are You Hungry For?



Most of us would say we eat because we are hungry. But how do you know you are hungry? The physical feelings of hunger can be painfully obvious at times, but are often rather subtle. They are also easily confused with sensations of thirst, anxiety, and fatigue. **Recognizing the difference between hunger for food and other impulses to eat will help you make wiser decisions about when, what, and how much to eat.** You will have a deeper understanding of your desires to eat and how your body reacts to food. Studies of the American consumer show that we make 200 to 300 decisions about food every day. Being constantly stimulated by the sight, smell, and opportunity to eat encourages habitual, mindless consumption of food. In fact, visual cues and the smell of food can trigger dopamine release in the brain, which is tied to cravings.

How to take control of your non-food hunger:

By paying more attention to what the physical sensations of hunger feel like, you can recognize when you may be hungry for something else- rest, stress release, emotional connection, even exercise.

Try this exercise to increase your understanding of your hunger signals:

1. Take a few deep breaths, calming your mind and tuning into your body.
2. Rate your physical hunger from 1 (not at all) to 10 (extremely hungry).
3. How do you know? Think about what information you used to come up with this number: it may be physical sensations or the knowledge that you ate just an hour ago.
4. Do this activity at different times of the day when you are very hungry, moderately hungry and not at all hungry. For each of these states, start to get a sense of the physical sensations associated with each of them: what does your stomach feel like? What does your body feel like? What does your hunger feel like?



It can be healthy to be less reactive to the first signals of hunger, as we start to unravel the true need for food nourishment and psychological needs. Keep in mind that hunger is not an emergency. It is a signal from your body and mind, not necessarily that you need to eat. You can ride the wave of hunger and see where it takes you.

**Come visit the clinic's dietitian! Available to
clinic patients on Tuesdays. Call
415-750-9894.**

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News Bites

Mindful
Eating



In a 2012 study published in the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, Mindful Eating meditation practices were used during restaurant meals with a small group of women. Over the course of six weeks, participants used mealtime meditations to increase awareness of their food consumption. The results? The women ate fewer calories and fat for the entire day while losing more weight than the control group. This evidence supports the use of techniques like hunger awareness as an aid in guiding us through challenging food environments.



What's Fresh

Berries are busting out at the market these days! The wet winter and warm spring provides perfect conditions for delicious strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries. Fruit often is left out of healthy diet plans because of its higher sugar content. While these foods are grouped with veggies in most dietary guidelines, they provide unique nutrients and should be a part of your daily diet. Numerous observational studies have found a connection between regular fruit intake and decreased risk for strokes, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, and early death. That's a lot of benefit from such delicious food. They provide a colorful burst of visual pleasure as well.

Berry Ideas: Add them to your salads and breakfast cereals - cold or hot. Eat them as a snack for a boost of fiber and phytonutrients, rinse and pack up for an on the go treat. Try to eat at least 1-2 cups of fruit per day.

———— THE "ARE THOSE ALL FRUITS?" SALAD —————

While we don't think of avocados and tomatoes as fruits, botanically they are! This beautiful simple salad might surprise you by combining strawberries and avocados- foods we don't normally see together.

1 cup sliced strawberries	2 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 sliced avocado	1 Tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 cup halved cherry tomatoes	1/4 cup loosely packed basil, thinly sliced
Salt and pepper to taste	

Whisk the oil and vinegar together, season with salt and pepper. Toss with the strawberries, tomatoes and basil. Layer the avocado on top and enjoy!

Adapted from Oh She Glows by Angela Liddon.

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