

# **EDUCATIONAL SERIES**

## **PACKET #1**

**live well, work well**

Health and wellness tips for your work, home, and life—  
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# The Importance of Breakfast

## *Rise, shine, and EAT!*

You hit the snooze button one too many times, and now you are rushing to get ready for work. There is no way you have time for breakfast, but that's not a big deal, right? Wrong.

Ever wonder where the term "breakfast" came from? Your body needs to refuel after a long night's sleep – a "break" from the "fast." Skipping breakfast leads to low blood sugar, fatigue, irritability and poor attentiveness.

### **Research**

Studies have shown that eating a healthy breakfast can lead to better strength and endurance, sharper concentration and better problem-solving abilities. The American Dietetic Association reports that children who eat a morning meal perform better in school. Also, people who eat breakfast generally consume more vitamins, minerals, and other healthy nutrients than those who do not eat in the morning.

### **Weight Management**

Eating breakfast helps to control snacking and binge

eating throughout the day. Typically, when breakfast is skipped, hunger takes control, leading to unwise food choices later in the day – and excessive calorie intake. This applies to children as well; studies have shown kids who skip breakfast are twice as likely to be overweight.

### **What is Considered a Healthy Breakfast?**

A "balanced" breakfast should include a substantial amount of fiber (which can include juice, fruit or vegetables), low- or non-fat dairy, whole grains and some lean protein. Possibly the best meal to consume is a high-fiber fortified cereal with milk, eggs and a glass of orange juice. This breakfast alone provides the essential vitamins B, C and D, calcium, folic acid, protein, and iron.

### **Time-Saving Tips**

Are you chronically late in the mornings? Then think ahead

so you have no excuse for missing breakfast:

- Make a smoothie with fruit and low-fat yogurt.
- Prepare a hard-boiled egg the night before and grab it on your way out the door, along with a piece of fruit.
- Take your breakfast to work and prepare it there.
- Put a whole wheat bagel in the toaster while you gather your things.
- When you make your lunch for work, consider making breakfast for the next day.
- Why not have dinner for breakfast? If you have leftovers from the day before, it might be a delicious – and unique – way to start your day!



### **Did you know...?**

Some people are not hungry first thing in the morning, but it is still important to refuel. Try to eat something anyway, such as a piece of toast and a grapefruit. Within 2 to 3 weeks, your body will recognize that it needs food in the mornings, and you will have established a pattern.

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# Eat a Low-Stress Diet

## *Foods that promote a relaxed state of mind*

Even though your job or family life may be the main source of stress in your life, your diet can also contribute to emotional turmoil as well. According to the Wellness Council of America (WELCOA), as you become increasingly stressed, the following occurs:

- Vital nutrients are depleted in the body and are generally not replaced because of stress-prone eating habits.
- Individuals gravitate toward foods that promote a stress response to fulfill a need. These foods include refined sugar, processed flour, salt, caffeine, etc. These foods can compromise the immune system.

Many stressed individuals eat poorly because they do not have time to find healthy ways to replenish their bodies or crave and desire junk food during stressful experiences.

To avoid stress food traps, consider these healthy eating recommendations:

- Eat a diet rich in foods of many colors, such as vegetables.
- Select foods that are high in antioxidants, like broccoli, carrots, whole grains, spinach and any kind of berries.
- Opt for organic foods whenever possible.
- Drink filtered water to keep you hydrated.
- Reduce or eliminate your caffeine intake.
- Cook with fresh herbs and spices.
- Consume free-range meats to avoid ingesting synthetic hormones and fertilizers.

- Avoid eating genetically modified foods, especially meat products.
- Consume at least 30 to 40 grams of fiber each day. Good sources of fiber include apples, peas, whole wheat bread, and bran cereal.
- Add omega-3 fatty acids to your diet, either by way of a supplement or in foods, such as salmon, walnuts, shrimp and soybeans.

### **Did you know...?**

In addition to eating a low-stress diet, make time for you and decompress after a long day. Go for a long walk, practice yoga or take a hot bath to re-energize for a better tomorrow.

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# Eat Healthy to Give Your Memory a Boost

Believe the hype... there are certain foods that can increase the chances of keeping your brain healthy as you age. If you're concerned with remaining mentally sharp as you age, consider adding these foods to your diet:

## Glucose

- Your body metabolizes glucose when eating healthy sugars and carbohydrates.
- Opt for fruits that are rich in natural sugars.

## Fish

- Fish is rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which are essential for good brain function and development.
- Fish is linked with a lower risk of dementia and stroke, can help slow mental decline, and can enhance memory as you age.

## Nuts and Chocolate

- Nuts are rich in vitamin E, which is attributed to

slowing cognitive decline as you get older.

- Dark chocolate (consumed in moderation) has antioxidants, which can enhance concentration.
- Opt for an ounce of nuts and chocolate daily to reap the health benefits without the unnecessary calories.

## Avocados and Whole Grains

- Avocados and whole grains enhance blood flow to stimulate brain cells.

## Blueberries

- Blueberries protect the brain from stress and may reduce the effects of Alzheimer's disease and dementia.
- These fruits may

increase your learning capacity and motor skills as you age.

## Iron-Rich Foods

- Iron deficiency negatively affects learning, memory and attention.
- Eat dark, leafy greens, beans, lean meat and soy to boost the iron in your body.



## Did you know...?

Older adults who ate more brightly colored fruits and vegetables experienced less cognitive decline compared to those who did not consume these foods at all, according to a recent study. The antioxidants in these foods eliminate free radicals and protect neurons in the brain from damage.

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# Emotional Eating

## *Recommendations for curbing unnecessary eating*

Amongst tragedy, celebration and anger, many people turn to food for comfort. More times than not, food is used as a coping mechanism for sadness, depression or anger. However, eating to suppress feelings not only sabotages efforts to lose weight, it eventually leads to depressed feelings as people put on pounds. Emotional eaters can get back on track if they figure out what triggers caused the need to eat.

### **Food and Emotions**

Traumatic events such as losing a job, divorce, the death of a loved one, health problems and work stress can lead to emotional eating. Since some foods trigger the release of mood-elevating hormones (chocolate), the body then craves these foods when the mind feels down in the dumps.

Food also serves as a distraction from the real problems facing an emotional eater's life. For instance, if an individual is worried about a big presentation at work or just had a huge fight with a spouse, comfort foods tend to calm nerves and suppress feelings of anxiety. Instead of worrying about the problems, the eater is fixated on the positive feeling of eating. Yet, once done eating, the emotional eater focuses not only on his/her problems again but also on how much they overate. This leads to more grief in the long run.

### **Characteristics of an Emotional Eater**

- Eating when feeling strong emotions such as anger and depression caused by an event unrelated to food. Also, eating when bored.
- Becoming incredibly hungry without warning and feeling as though he/she must eat immediately.
- Craving specific foods that are usually unhealthy, such

as chocolate, pasta or candy. When having a craving, no other food will do.

- Cravings are felt in the mouth and in the mind; the stomach is not hungry.
- Eating absent-mindedly, as if someone else is feeding the eater forcefully.
- Cannot stop eating even when full.

### **Gaining Control of Emotional Eating**

- *Learn to identify real hunger:* If the eater ate only a few hours prior and his/her stomach is not rumbling in response to hunger, than he/she probably should not eat.



- *Identify triggers:* Eaters should keep a food journal and write down everything that they eat, how they felt emotionally right before they ate, and how they felt when they were done eating. It is also beneficial to note how hunger played into the eating. Then, analyze what emotions accompanied food intake to determine what is causing the need to eat.
- *Find comforts outside of food:* Pick up a hobby such as watching a movie, listening to music, taking a walk or visiting a friend instead of eating when feeling particularly blue.
- *Remove unhealthy foods from the home:* If junk food is not there, you can't eat it.
- *Snack smart:* Instead of reaching for unhealthy foods when feeling hungry, eat a piece of fruit or vegetables.
- *Eat a balanced diet:* In general, emotional eaters should try to eat a balanced diet so as to not give in to emotional eating later on.
- *Exercise and get enough sleep*

Instead of getting angry after eating emotionally, move on from the experience and identify the issues that cause the need to eat. Tackle those problems, and emotional eating will pass.

## **Did you know...?**

Emotional eating is an incredibly common psychological problem, especially for women. To curb this issue, the root of why someone eats must be detected before the eating will stop.

**EDUCATIONAL SERIES FOR CITY OF FINDLAY FITNESS STIPEND – PACKET #1**

LIVE WELL, WORK WELL INFORMATION INCLUDED IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE:

- The Importance of Breakfast
- Eat Healthy to Give Your Memory a Boost
- Eat a Low-Stress Diet
- Emotional Eating

Please rate the statements below as either true or false

Circle One

- |    |  |      |       |
|----|--|------|-------|
| 1. | A “balanced” breakfast should include a substantial amount of fiber.   | True | False |
| 2. | Dark chocolate (consumed in moderation) can enhance concentration.   | True | False |
| 3. | Many stressed individuals eat poorly because they do not have time to find healthy ways to replenish their bodies. | True | False |
| 4. | Food serves as a distraction from the real problems facing an emotional eater’s life.                              | True | False |

I have read the four Live Well, Work Well publications listed above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date