

Journaling the “Truth”

(First in a three-part series)

Awareness of what you actually eat and how much you truly exercise is all about writing it down. One of the best ways to initiate a serious health conscious approach to health is to keep a log that includes the following information:

Date/Time	Mood: e.g. Sad, Glad, Angry, Bored, Depressed, etc... Place where you ate:	Amount & Type of Food Eaten	Hunger Level: 1 = Low 2 = Average 3 = Famished	Exercise: Description of type, time, distance, etc...
BREAKFAST Example: 4/22/07, 6:30 AM	Sleepy Car	1 Yogurt Parfait: 2/3 cup with 1 T granola & 3 T. fruit –no sugar	1 = Low, Barely awake & moving	None
Morning				
Lunch				
Afternoon				
Dinner				
Evening				

Once you record your actions **look at your pattern of eating.** You will be surprised how many times you eat without thinking. Remember the other day when you walked past the cookie tray in the office and you “nibbled” on ‘just one’?

This process of self analysis heightens your awareness of several factors. First, are you eating because of your mood? Is it food you really need or to simply de-stress at some point in your day? Are you eating when angry, sad, or to socialize? In other words, are you truly hungry and in need of food or has food become an unconscious reaction to things in your life?

Secondly, a major factor in healthy

eating is **portion size.** Start by reading the labels when you purchase your food items. Food packaging states the actual single serving size and how many servings of the product are in the container.

The food industry has slowly increased the size of the portions so you actually have enough food to feed at least two people when you order one meal. “Mega” portions are not in your best interest.

As an example, 20 years ago a bagel was 3 inches in diameter and 140 calories; today it is 6 inches in size and 350 calories or more, depending on the ingredients. You would have to exercise steadily for close to an hour to

burn the extra calories from the larger bagel. Now add a cup of coffee with the bagel. Today, individuals frequently choose “fancy” type coffees such as lattes. These drinks have added sugar, milk and syrup and a 16 oz. cup can have around 350 or more calories whereas 20 years ago you usually had a simple 8 oz. cup of plain coffee with sugar and whole milk that had only 45 calories. All these subtle changes in our eating habits creep up unconsciously into new habits. If a person maintained their current diet and stopped eating the equivalent of one bagel per day you could lose up to 12 pounds in a year. That’s the effect of added calories over time.

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Bacon & Egg McMuffin	300 calories
Hash Browns	156 calories
Big Mac	490 calories
Cheeseburger	310 calories
Filet-O-Fish	347 calories
McChicken	431 calories

Large French Fries	450 calories
Medium French Fries	380 calories
Coca-Cola (Medium-21fl.oz)	210 calories
Coca-Cola (Large-32 fl. oz)	310 calories
Coffee (Small-12 fl. oz)	0 calories
Bacon Ranch Salad w/ Grilled Chicken	260 calories

The average American family eats out three to five times a week or more. The truth is eating by going through the drive-through window may be fast but as we know losing all those extra calories can be a slow process.

Look at the following statistics:

Overweight/Obesity

- 30% of US adults 20 years of age and older (over 60 million people) are obese. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/>
- Among children and teens aged 6-19 in the US, 16% (over 9 million) are considered overweight. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/>
- Among children ages 2-5, the prevalence of overweight has

increased from 7% to more than 10% since 1994. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 1999-2000. The Journal of the American Medical Association 2004; 291: 2847-50.

Lack of Physical Activity

- **At least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week is the recommended minimum.** However, only 23% of children and nearly 40% of adults get no free-time physical activity at all. Source: Physical activity levels among children aged 9-13 years—United States, 2002. MMWR 2003; 52[33]: 785-8 and National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 1999-2001.
- The typical American child spends about 44.5 hours per week using

media **outside of school.** Source: Generation M: Media in the lives of 8-18 Year Olds. Menlo Park, California. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005.

- One quarter of U.S. children spend 4 hours or more watching television daily. Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Physical Activity Fact Sheet at http://www.fitness.gov/resources_factsheet.htm
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than one to two hours of quality TV and videos a day for older children and no screen time for children under the age of 2. Source: American Academy of Pediatrics (2004). Media guideline for parents. Available online at <http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/mediause.cfm>

See chart below for the number of **minutes of exercise** required to burn off calories for the foods listed below.

Exercise	Cheeseburger and Fries	Large Hamburger and Fries	Fish and Chips	Chicken and Fries	3 Pancakes with butter & syrup
Golf With Trolley	224	290	188	260	171
Dancing Energetic	102	132	85	118	78
Swimming Steadily	81	105	68	95	62
Walking 3mph	136	176	114	158	104

<http://www.annecollins.com/exercise-calories/burgers.htm>

Journaling the “truth” will help you to be realistic with yourself regarding the choices you have to balance your diet with daily physical activity. Just for today choose health.

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