

The Healing Power of Food

Eating disorders

Dieting

- ◆ Remember the difference between “going on a diet” and changing your lifestyle for health?
- ◆ People who “go on diets” often do this for the wrong reasons
- ◆ They often fail.
- ◆ This leads to yo-yo dieting with repeated failures.
- ◆ This leads to depression and anxiety and can lead to eating disorders.

Dieting for the wrong reasons

- ◆ I don't like myself as I am.
- ◆ People won't like me as I am.
- ◆ I won't "fit in" if I am overweight.
- ◆ I want to look like a super model.
- ◆ I want to wear trendy clothes.

Changing your lifestyle for the right reasons

- ◆ I know that God loves me as I am, but I want to live a long and healthy life so that I can serve Him, and fulfil the purpose he has for me.
- ◆ If I don't change my lifestyle, I am a sitting time-bomb for diabetes and heart disease.
- ◆ My worth as an individual is not based on how I look, but having good health will give me a better life.

Problems with “dieting”

- ◆ obsession with eating or not eating
- ◆ feeling guilty when you eat the wrong foods
- ◆ punishing yourself for failure
- ◆ starving yourself with “low-calorie” foods
- ◆ hunger
- ◆ mood changes when you don’t have enough food for energy

Why do so many attempts to “diet” fail?

- ◆ Apart from dieting for the wrong reasons ...
- ◆ Most people try to diet with incorrect health advice, or wrong preconceived ideas such as ...
- ◆ Restricting your food intake will automatically cause you to lose weight. (Wrong!)
- ◆ You shouldn't eat anything containing fat. (Wrong!)

How is a low-carb lifestyle eating pattern different?

- ◆ You can eat normal **quantities** of food.
- ◆ You are careful about choosing the right nutrients.
- ◆ You can eat fat and protein together, which will satisfy you and make you feel satisfied instead of hungry.

Advantages of eating to change your lifestyle

- ◆ You learn which foods are optimal for your health.
- ◆ You don't have to "count calories" because you know the best foods to eat.
- ◆ Your goal is to lose weight gradually, and if you have occasional slips, you know how to get back on track.
- ◆ You will never feel starving or even hungry if you eat enough protein and fat.
- ◆ You will feel healthier because you are getting the right nutrients.

Diets that go too far:

1. Anorexia

- ◆ When the diet becomes so restrictive, you have an imbalance of nutrients, so less energy.
- ◆ As this process progresses, you start to lose weight, but you're actually starving your body.
- ◆ This can lead to a preoccupation with food and urges to overeat.
- ◆ There are also mood changes including irritability, increased anxiety, distorted body image, fear of failure and shame.

Anorexia

- ◆ Anorexia is very dangerous because your body doesn't get the nutrients it needs to stay healthy.
- ◆ As a result, you may develop problems throughout your body, including conditions that affect your heart, muscles, digestion, skin and hair.

Diets that go too far:

2. Bulimia

- ◆ This starts from submitting yourself to extreme hunger when dieting.
- ◆ This can lead to binge eating or a loss of control while eating.
- ◆ A person who binge eats consumes a large amount of food at one time and may not feel like they can stop even when they're full.

Bulimia

- ◆ To compensate for overeating, there are attempts to “get rid” of food consumed during a binge, include self-induced vomiting, over-exercising and laxative abuse.
- ◆ Driven by a desire to lose weight, a person may find themselves in a cycle of bingeing and purging.
- ◆ Without treatment, bulimia can cause serious health problems like dehydration, tooth decay, ulcers and heart failure.

What are the symptoms and warning signs?

- ◆ emotional eating
- ◆ repetitive or obsessive dieting and binge eating
- ◆ thinking and talking about food, weight and body appearance a lot of the time
- ◆ preoccupation with exercise or body building
- ◆ feeling guilt and or shame about eating patterns
- ◆ fearing gaining weight
- ◆ difficulty concentrating

Overcoming eating disorders

- ◆ Self-acceptance – stop believing you're not good enough.
- ◆ Try to remember that you don't have to do things perfectly all the time. You have a long-term goal.
- ◆ Have a realistic perception of what your body looks like or should look like.
- ◆ Know that you are loved by God and others.
- ◆ Stay away from influences of the media and social pressures to look a certain way.
- ◆ When overwhelmed, ask for help.

Reflection

How can you turn any negative thoughts about weight loss into a positive challenge?

Make a list of positive goals for improving your health.