

# Diet Goofs

*by Linda Fiveson*

How come we are “always” ON A DIET? How can we eventually maintain our weight loss successfully? What are the common mistakes that interfere with our progress and perhaps, ruin the results?

Going on a diet creates obsessions with food -- even healthy food. Eventually we wind up focusing on what's less in fat or calories, and of course, fixating on which foods will give us the fastest weight loss.

I've always thought that “too much” of anything such as hard-core dieting, becoming a “gym-rat” and certainly striving for “perfection,” will lead to some level of disappointment. It has been my experience that unrealistic expectations will lead to big let-downs. Once that happens, the “why” questions begin to multiply in our minds: “Why aren't I losing faster?” “Why are my abs not more defined?” “Why doesn't my stomach look flatter?” “Why is it that when I look in the mirror I still don't like what I see?” These are all challenging questions. Everyone is different and comparing your results with others will only stress you out, and some of us are “stress-eaters!”

Our brains have no connection with our bodies. It's the “this isn't working fast enough” mentality that will cause us to throw in the towel.

I'm sure most of you think you are “on track”. Yes, the marketing of what's healthy has been re-defined so often that even when we do try to make better choices, they aren't necessarily better. And remember, healthy eating is not always the same as weight-loss eating.

Many of us simply eat too much. Yes, some foods are unlimited, but that doesn't mean you have to gorge yourself until your stomach is so stuffed with vegetables that you can't breathe!

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Skipping meals, thinking less is better will not lead to better results. You might find yourself eating more at the next meal or picking mindlessly because you are “entitled” to the calories you have banked for the day. The handfuls, bites, licks and tastes during the day “add up” and can negate the best of diet intentions.

To avoid the mindless munchies, plan your snacks and keep cut-up vegetables or extra protein available to avoid making the wrong choices. (“JUST ONE” of anything wrong counts!) Even four bites a day worth 100 calories add up to a pound of added weight per month.

Keeping a journal of what you eat is a great tool and if you are completely honest with yourself this will help you become mindful of everything that goes in your mouth.

Weekend warriors are the most common offenders. You can very easily un-do a week of good eating on the weekend. You should plan to eat in restaurants that have the proper choices for you. Steakhouses, Italian, Japanese (no rice) and Chinese (steamed) always have options. Check out the menu before you go to the restaurant to have a plan of what you may choose to order. Being prepared is your best defense!

Dipping... a carrot stick is “not” a carrot stick if it's dunked into blue cheese dip. Nuts (about 7 pieces) and peanut butter are fattening; they have 180 calories per ounce! They are a fat, not a protein.

And who decided that sweet potato fries are a healthier version of the French fry? Besides the beta-carotene, vitamin C, folic acid, potassium and fiber, you have just skyrocketed the fat and calories to compare to the white potato version. What about hard cheese? It's a bad saturated fat. I call it a “glue stick” running through your veins and

arteries!

Barbecue sauce and ketchup must be counted. Read the labels on these products and check the ingredients to find one that lists sugar (or sugar derivatives) as the 4<sup>th</sup> or higher item. A skinless piece of protein smothered in these condiments can add a lot of sugar which equates to adding calories. The closer to the top of the ingredient list, the more it has! You can dilute the sauce with water or use salsa or hot sauce instead.

Olive oil is considered a healthy fat, but rubbing your grill or food with the oil instead of pouring it in will save a lot of calories and still give you the same results. At 120 calories a tablespoon, winding up with 6-7 tablespoons can make your meal fattening.

And finally, salads! What happened? Dried fruit, cheese, nuts, seeds, candied walnuts, pecans, beans, chick peas and croutons have just turned this meal into a 1,200 calorie disaster and yes, we ask for "light" dressing (on the side.) LOL!

Now we come to liquid calories such as fancy coffees, juices and creamy soups just to name a few. Just because you didn't chew it doesn't mean it doesn't count.

So, it's pretty clear that everything counts when it comes to losing weight. When we make up our minds to truly commit to a healthy and "make-sense" program of nutrition and weight loss we have to commit to giving up the unhealthy categories of food. Then, it's about "THINKING BEFORE YOU EAT IT!"

**Linda Fiveson is a Nutritionist in Syosset, N.Y. In addition to counseling she sells her own line of foods which are all free of flour, sugar, gluten and refined carbohydrates. For more information call (516) 496-2300 or visit her website at [www.lindafiveson.com](http://www.lindafiveson.com)**