



Weight Management

Online Book

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Many Americans view a healthy lifestyle as something difficult to attain--and something that's not much fun. Traditional diets have taught us that to lose weight, we must count calories, keep track of everything we eat, and deprive ourselves by limiting the amount--and kinds--of foods we eat. Diets tell us exactly what and how much food to eat, regardless of our preferences and individual relationships with hunger and satiety. Dieting can help us lose weight (fat, muscle, and water) in the short term but is so unnatural and so unrealistic that it can never become a lifestyle that we can live with, let alone enjoy!

While very few diets teach healthy low-fat shopping, cooking, and dining-out strategies, many offer unrealistic recommendations and encourage health-threatening restrictions. Even more important, diets don't teach us the safest, most effective ways to exercise; they don't teach us how to deal with our cravings and our desires, or how to attend to our feelings of hunger and fullness. Eventually, we become tired of the complexity, the hunger, the lack of flavor, the lack of flexibility, the lack of energy, and the feeling of deprivation. We quit our diets and gain back the weight we've lost; sometimes we gain even more!

Deprivation Doesn't Work!

Each time we go on another diet of deprivation, the weight becomes more difficult to lose, and we become even more frustrated and discouraged. Then we eat more and exercise less, causing ourselves more frustration, discouragement, depression. Soon we are in a vicious cycle. We begin to ask ourselves, "Why bother?" We begin to blame ourselves for having no will power when what we really need is clear, scientifically-based information that will help us develop a healthier lifestyle we can live with for the rest of our lives.

The Weight Management component of the Global Health and Fitness (GHF) program is not a diet that you'll quit because it's too difficult or because you've reached a six-month weight-loss goal. GHF offers a healthier way of eating and a happier way of living. We offer a realistic, sensible approach to food and a more fun and more effective approach to exercise. We teach you how to gradually adopt those new behaviors so that they become part of an improved way of life, one without guilt, without rules, and without deprivation.

Small, Gradual Changes: An Effective Alternative

If your weight management program is to be a success, everything you eat and every exercise you do must be a pleasurable experience. If you're not enjoying yourself, it is unlikely that you'll continue your program. It's that simple.

These small, gradual changes are not painful or overwhelming but rather the core of an exciting lifestyle that you will look forward to.

GHF offers easy-to-understand and easy-to-follow recommendations on shopping for and cooking low-fat healthy foods. We'll also discuss simple ways of reducing the fat in the foods you choose when you eat out. You'll learn about the many nonfat and low-fat ingredients that can reduce the fat in your favorite recipes without reducing taste. We'll explain why you should reduce dietary fat and just how much fat your daily diet should include for your optimum health. You'll also learn the roles that carbohydrates, protein, fiber, and water play in an effective weight management program.

In addition, GHF will provide you with over 175 healthy recipes, low in fat and high in nutritional value. We know, however, that foods must be more than just healthy. They must also be delicious and visually appealing, or you probably won't eat them. The foods must also be quick and easy to prepare, or you probably won't make them. The GHF recipes are foods you'll enjoy again and again.

Many cookbooks and diet programs reduce the fat in recipes by using artificial sweeteners and fat substitutes; they may also rely on highly refined and processed foods. Unfortunately, these practices compromise nutrition. On the other hand, the GHF recommendations are easy-to-follow recipes for delicious, well-balanced meals. They include techniques for reducing the fat **and** increasing the nutritional value of your own favorite foods.

Cardiovascular Exercise and Strength Training Are Crucial

Many so-called healthy diets are too narrow, focusing as they do solely on nutrition and calorie reduction. They tend to ignore the other two vital components of an effective weight management program: cardiovascular exercise and strength training. Someone with the healthiest possible eating habits will still have a hard time achieving the desired results of body shape and fitness without an effective exercise program because success--and good health in general--depends on a safe and effective combination of cardiovascular fitness and stronger bones and muscles. That is why GHF offers an

integrated program.

The Dangers of Excess Body Fat

Most people's primary motivation for weight management is to improve their appearance. Equally important, however, are the many other benefits of proper nutrition and regular exercise.

Weight management through reduction of excess body fat plays a vital role in maintaining good health and fighting disease. In fact, medical evidence shows that obesity poses a major threat to health and longevity. (The most common definition of obesity is more than 25 percent body fat for men and more than 32 percent for women.) An estimated one in three Americans has some excess body fat; an estimated 20 percent are obese.

Excess body fat is linked to major physical threats like heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. (Three out of four Americans die of either heart disease or cancer each year; according to the National Health and Nutrition Examination survey, approximately 80 percent of those deaths are associated with life-style factors, including inactivity.)

For example, if you're obese, it takes more energy for you to breathe because your heart has to work harder to pump blood to the lungs and to the excess fat throughout the body. This increased work load can cause your heart to become enlarged and can result in high blood pressure and life-threatening erratic heartbeats.

Obese people also tend to have high cholesterol levels, making them more prone to arteriosclerosis, a narrowing of the arteries by deposits of plaque. This becomes life-threatening when blood vessels become so narrow or blocked that vital organs like the brain, heart or kidneys are deprived of blood. Additionally, the narrowing of the blood vessels forces the heart to pump harder, and blood pressure rises. High blood pressure itself poses several health risks, including heart attack, kidney failure, and stroke. About 25 percent of all heart and blood vessel problems are associated with obesity.

Clinical studies have found a relationship between excess body fat and the incidence of cancer. By itself, body fat is thought to be a storage place for carcinogens (cancer-causing chemicals) in both men and women. In women, excess body fat has been linked to a higher rate of breast and uterine cancer; in men, the threat comes from colon and prostate cancer.

There is also a delicate balance between blood sugar, body fat, and the hormone insulin. Excess blood sugar is stored in the liver and other vital organs; when the organs are "full," the excess blood sugar is converted to fat. As fat cells themselves become full, they tend to take in less blood sugar. In some obese people, the pancreas produces more and more insulin, which the body can't use, to regulate blood sugar levels, and the whole system becomes overwhelmed. This poor regulation of blood sugar and insulin results in diabetes, a disease with long-term consequences, including heart disease, kidney failure, blindness, amputation, and death. Excess body fat is also linked to gall bladder disease, gastro-intestinal

disease, sexual dysfunction, osteoarthritis, and stroke.

Reducing Body Fat Reduces Disease Risk

The good news is that reducing body fat reduces the risk of disease. At the University of Pittsburgh, researchers studied 159 people as they followed a weight management program. The subjects were under age 45 and 30-70 pounds overweight. Those subjects who were able to shed just 10-15 percent of their weight and keep it off during the 18-month study showed significant improvement in HDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels, waist-to-hip ratio, and blood pressure. In fact, according to the *New England Journal of Medicine*, body fat reduction is a more powerful modulator of cardiac structure than drug therapy.

For people with a family history of heart disease, an active lifestyle can slow or stop the process for all but those with serious genetic disorders. Studies by Dean Ornish, MD, have shown that a comprehensive intervention program that includes regular physical activity, a low-fat diet and a stress reduction program can even reverse the heart disease process.

Evidence also shows that an active lifestyle and its help in reducing body fat is associated with a reduced risk for some types of cancers: prostate for men, breast and uterine cancers for women. (Frisch, et al 1985)

In addition, regular physical activity and a low-fat diet are successful in treating non-insulin dependent diabetes (NIDDM); for some patients, it has reduced or eliminated the need for insulin substitutes. In general, regularly active adults have 42 percent lower risk of developing NIDDM.

Gaining Weight Happens to Most of Us

The average American gains at least one pound a year after age 25. Think about it. If you're like most Americans, by the time you're 50, you're likely to gain 25 pounds of fat, or more. In addition, your metabolism is also slowing down, causing your body to work less efficiently at burning the fat it has. At the same time, if you don't exercise regularly, you lose a pound of muscle each year. Consequently, people are not only increasing their body fat stores, increasing their risk of disease, but they're also losing muscle, increasing the risk of injury, decreasing activity performance, and further slowing down metabolism.

Very few Americans exercise in any significant way. The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports estimates that only one in five Americans exercises for the healthy minimum of 20 minutes, three or more days a week. In fact, the average American gets less than 50 minutes of exercise per week. Even worse, two out of five Americans are completely sedentary.

The Answer: Healthy Eating and Physical Fitness

But there is hope. Moderate weight loss--of fat, not muscle--and a healthy and active lifestyle--not dieting--have been found to lower health risks and medical problems in 90 percent of overweight patients, improving their heart function, blood pressure, glucose tolerance, sleep disorders, and cholesterol levels, as well as lowering their requirements for medication, lowering the incidence and duration of hospitalization, and reducing post-operative complications eight times less likely to die from cancer than the unfit, and 53 percent less likely to die from other diseases. Fit people are also eight times less likely to die from heart disease.

The integrated program of GHF can help you adapt your lifestyle to one of better health. And help you become one of those fit people.

More Bad News About Dieting

Deliberate restriction of food intake in order to lose weight or to prevent weight gain, known as dieting, is the path that millions of people all over the world are taking in order to reach a desired body weight or appearance. Preoccupation with body shape, size, and weight creates an unhealthy lifestyle of emotional and physical deprivation. Diets take control away from us.

Many of us who diet get caught in a "yo-yo" cycle that begins with low self-acceptance and results in structured eating and living because we lack trust in our body and are unwilling to listen and adhere to our body's signals of hunger and fullness. On diets, we distrust and ignore internal signs of appetite, hunger, and our need to be physically and psychologically satisfied. Instead, we depend on diet plans, measured portions, and a prescribed frequency for eating.

As a result, many of us have lost the ability to eat in response to our physical needs; we experience feelings of deprivation, then binge, and finally terminate our "health" program. This in turn leads to guilt, defeat, weight gain, low self-esteem, and then we're back to the beginning of the yo-yo diet cycle. Rather than making us feel better about ourselves, diets set us up for failure and erode our self-esteem.

Adhering to diet plans leads to perfectionist tendencies that in turn can result in a loss of control. People with the diet mentality have a perception of foods as either "good" (diet foods) or "bad" (binge foods); they see foods as coming in "good" amounts (small/low-calorie) or "large" amounts (diet-breaking). When we dieters eat "bad" foods or "large" amounts, we tend to believe we have "blown" our diet for the day or the weekend so we might as well binge further and start over the next day.

The Dos and Don'ts of Dieting Don't Do It

Following the list of foods that a diet allows or forbids us is really only feasible in the short term. If we don't change our tastes and preferences so we learn to enjoy foods lower in fat and higher in nutritional value, we will feel more and more restricted. And eventually we will resume our former eating habits because we still have a preference for high-fat foods.

When you diet, a piece of pizza is sinful; eating cake and ice cream makes you a bad person. A missed workout means skipping dinner and doing hundreds of crunches. A planned dinner engagement requires skipping breakfast and having just a piece of fruit for lunch. You refuse a dinner party for fear of being tempted with food you haven't "earned" or calories you haven't "saved."

The attitudes and practices acquired through years of dieting are likely to result in a body weight and size obsession, low self-esteem, poor nutrition and excessive or inadequate exercise. Weight loss from following a rigid diet is usually temporary. Most diets are too drastic to maintain; they are unrealistic and unpleasant; they are physically and emotionally stressful. And most of us just resume our old eating and activity patterns. Diets control us; we are not in control. People who try to live by diet lists and rules learn little or nothing about proper nutrition and how to enjoy their meals, physical activity, and a healthy lifestyle. No one can realistically live in the diet mode for the rest of their life, depriving themselves of the true pleasures of healthy eating and activity.

We Don't Fail Diets; They Fail Us!

Decades of research have shown that diets, both self-initiated and professionally-led, are ineffective at producing long-term health and weight loss (or weight control). When your diet fails to keep the weight off, you may say to yourself, "If only I didn't love food so much . . . If I could just exercise more often . . . If I just had more will power." The problem is not personal weakness or lack of will power. Only 5 percent of people who go on diets are successful. Please understand that we are not failing diets; diets are failing us.

Last Year, More Than 34 Million Americans Tried Diets!

Diets have made us more aware of calories. However, controlling your body weight through calorie-counting is almost impossible. The National Institutes of Health recently completed a 20-year study of traditional low-calorie diets to see if they really helped people lose weight and keep it off. The diet plans studied included Weight Watchers®, Jenny Craig®, The Diet Center® and most other traditional diet programs and diet fads. The study concluded that traditional low-calorie diet plans have a 95 percent failure rate; i.e., 95 percent of the people on the plans gained back all of the weight they had lost within a few years. **Most people gained back the weight during the next year! In fact, most people gain an additional five pounds after each dieting cycle.**

The reason 95 percent of all traditional diets fail is simple. When you go on a low-calorie diet, your body thinks you are starving; it actually becomes more efficient at storing fat by slowing down your metabolism. When you stop this unrealistic eating plan, your metabolism is still slow and inefficient that you gain the weight back even faster, even though you may still be eating less than you were before you went on the diet.

In addition, low-calorie diets cause you to lose both muscle and fat in equal amounts. However, when

you eventually gain back the weight, it is all fat and not muscle, causing your metabolism to slow down even more. Now you have extra weight, a less healthy body composition, and a less attractive physique.

Diets require you to sacrifice by being hungry; they don't allow you to enjoy the foods you love. This does not teach you habits which you can maintain after the diet is over. Most diet programs force you to lower your caloric intake to dangerously low levels. The common theory is that if you eat fewer calories than you burn, you will lose weight. But when you eat fewer calories than your body needs to maintain its life-sustaining activities, you're actually losing muscle in addition to fat. Your body breaks down its own muscles to provide the needed energy for survival. There's more.

All Calories Are Not Created Equal!

There are lean-supporting calories and fat-supporting calories; they are derived from three sources in food: carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. The calories provided by fat actually convert to body fat faster and more easily than calories from carbohydrates or proteins. In other words, carbohydrates and proteins are more likely to support the conversion of food to lean mass, such as muscle, bone, internal organs, and essential body fluids, while fats are more likely to support the storage of body fat. It's mostly the fat in food that ends up as body fat, unlike most of the carbohydrates and protein we consume which are used for supporting muscle and energy. By replacing high-fat foods with energy-producing carbohydrates and muscle-supporting protein, you can lose body fat and improve your health without the hazards of dieting.

The Psychological Risks of Dieting

Not only does dieting have the potential to harm our bodies, it can also harm our psyches. Unsuccessful attempts at long-term weight loss can seriously affect our psychological well-being. The increasing failure that comes with each weight loss attempt can further diminish our already low self-esteem and increase our risk of depression. Unfortunately, when this happens to us, we assume erroneously that the fault lies with us and not with the real culprit, the diet itself.

Other psychological risks of dieting include an obsession with body weight and size, disordered eating patterns which may increase the risk of developing an eating disorder, and an increased pressure to try to conform to society's standard of thinness. All of these problems tend to further weaken our ability to deal with food and our bodies in a healthy way.

Dieting: A Poor Role Model for Children

Consider for a moment the messages that dieting sends to our children. Parents who are constantly dieting and who are unhappy with their body often indicate to their child that he or she is also not okay and needs to go on a diet. Feelings of inadequacy and a reinforcement of the diet mentality can come from any of the following:

1. Using food as a reward, as comfort, or as a form of control.
2. Making children clean their plates as proof that they're "good" or in order to earn dessert rather than teaching them to tune into internal signals of fullness and satiety.
3. Centering holiday festivities on food rather than emphasizing the meaning of the occasion itself, friendship, conversation, family activities.
4. Relying on diet products like Slim-Fast® that don't allow children to acquire a taste for low-sugar foods.

Many times, we are just passing on attitudes about food and our bodies that we got from our parents. The GHF approach to health and weight management can help you break this cycle.

As you implement the important principles of the GHF Weight Management program into your lifestyle and begin tuning in to your body for signals of hunger and fullness, and enjoy physical activity, you will notice that the positive attitudes and healthy behaviors will transfer to your children. When you start living a healthier lifestyle, you'll notice a sense of inner satisfaction. When people take responsibility for their own health, their family is positively affected.

GHF Will Move You In Another Direction

Traditional diets which use calorie restriction to produce weight loss are no longer appropriate. Most weight-loss programs measure success solely in terms of the number of pounds lost per weight loss attempt. Diets don't take into account the quality of the process used to achieve that weight loss or the very small likelihood of sustained weight loss. For long-term good health, you need to move away from low-calorie diets and focus on enjoyable physical activity and good nutrition. Exercising regularly and eating lean-supporting calories, protein and carbohydrates, and reducing fat-supporting calories will not only help you look and feel better, it will also significantly reduce your risk of disease.

GHF will show you how to take the frustration, guilt, and deprivation out of weight management, allowing you to adopt gradual, realistic changes into your life that will make healthy eating and physical activity a permanent pleasure. You will soon discover what your body is capable of and begin enjoying the many benefits of fitness and good health!

Diets vs. the GHF Approach

Many people associate good health with physical appearance. Hundreds of thousands of Americans appear healthy because they aren't overweight. Yet because they don't exercise and don't eat a low-fat, nutritious diet, they are good candidates for the heart disease and cancers that kill three out of four, diseases that are primarily linked to lifestyle and behaviors. For most, the very first sign of heart disease is not being overweight or even having chest pains, it's having a heart attack, too often a fatal one. All people, including you, can develop heart disease, if they don't take care of their bodies.

America spends billions of dollars on different ways to fix people. If we focused more on prevention and

on improving our day-to-day behaviors, we could cut health care costs in half. Contrary to popular belief, leading a healthy lifestyle doesn't have to be difficult; it doesn't have to be painful or time-consuming. Making gradual, simple changes in your diet and physical activity will make great improvements in your health and well-being, and they can drastically reduce your risk of disease.

Most people who decide to lead a healthier lifestyle go on traditional diets. The truth is, however, that 95 percent of those who go on diets fail; what's worse, they often end up in worse shape than when they started. Diets are both ineffective and potentially harmful; they should be replaced by long-term health-oriented programs. Most people, though, do not know how to make the behavioral changes that promote optimum health.

GHF will teach you how to break out of the diet mentality and change your lifestyle in simple, yet very effective ways so you can not only add years to your life, but life to your years. Our program is not another 60-day prison sentence sure to fail; it is the beginning of an improved, more beneficial way to live.

How do you break out of the diet mentality? How do you shift your thinking from impractical or impossible quick weight-loss schemes? GHF can help you change your daily routine gradually and easily.

Our approach promotes self-reliance to maximize your potential for health and wellness. GHF emphasizes leaving behind the use of disordered eating patterns for the sole purpose of losing weight. We focus on optimizing nutrition and physical activity to promote total health and with it, a strong sense of well-being.

GHF offers a much healthier approach to eating and exercise. We will help you learn to successfully adopt new habits without guilt, without unrealistic rules, and without deprivation. You'll learn to make all your choices based on a reasonable and realistic course of pleasurable action that will gradually lead you to better health and improved physical performance.

Our weight management program has no strict rules to follow; it doesn't deprive you of the foods you love. GHF will teach you how to make smart choices when shopping, cooking, and eating out; it will teach you how to make healthy decisions about exercise. It will help you learn how to think in ways that will make an amazing difference in how you look, act, and feel. As these new habits become permanent, you will have mastered the healthy lifestyle everyone deserves to enjoy.

Our weight management approach will help you take the focus off your weight and counting calories and put that focus on to other goals such as healthier eating, enjoyable physical activity, and a positive self-image. We will provide you with the tools to be successful in developing a healthier way of living regardless of your weight. We'll encourage you to eat well and be active, to take charge of feeling good about yourself.

It is very important that you recognize "diet thinking" and consider an alternative approach. Those trapped in the diet paradigm use exercise solely for weight loss instead of for all the many other great benefits that result from a healthy level of activity. Sadly, dieters often terminate their healthy pattern of exercise and eating altogether if they can't follow it rigidly.

The GHF approach encourages you to enjoy fitness for its many contributions: improved energy, improved performance, an improved sense of general well-being. In order to forget past failures and move into a positive future, you must first accept yourself as you are; and as you develop into your full potential, you must be absolutely convinced that diets do not work!

By now, we hope you have a good understanding of why traditional diet programs are the wrong approach to take for losing or managing weight and for achieving total, optimal health and fitness. What follows is a discussion of our non-diet weight-management approach. If followed correctly, it will not only help you manage a healthy body composition, it will also, and perhaps most importantly, drastically reduce your risk of disease.

The Ten Certainties of Successful Weight Management

GHF's philosophy of safe and effective weight management rests on what we call the Ten Certainties. You must grasp and incorporate these ten ideas firmly in order to implement a successful weight management program. Once you are able to make these beliefs your own, you will enjoy integrating healthy eating habits into your life.

1. Accept Your Body and Learn to Have a Positive Self Image

Because thin females and muscular males are seen as the ideal in our society and because we have come to believe that body size and shape are totally under a person's control, most people enter diet and exercise programs with unrealistic goals and expectations. If you continually strive to achieve a socially imposed ideal, you will never be free of your insecurities or your self-consciousness. You must truly realize and then learn to accept that we are not all meant to be fashion-model size.

Our body size and structure reflects not only our eating and exercise habits but also our genetics. The role this latter factor plays in determining weight seems to vary greatly between individuals. We are all born with a certain body type inherited from our parents. Although hardly anyone is a pure body type, there are three different applicable categories: ectomorphs, mesomorphs, and endomorphs.

Characteristically, ectomorphs have a light build with slight muscular development. They are usually tall and thin with small frames and narrow hips and shoulders.

Mesomorphs have a husky, muscular build. They often have broad shoulders, and their weight is concentrated in the upper body, making them look compact or stocky.

Endomorphs are characterized by a heavy, rounded build with shoulders usually narrower than their hips. They have a round, soft appearance and are more often overweight or obese.

When we understand and appreciate our bodies, we are able to work with them, not against them. Although many of us are a combination of two body types, we cannot become what we are not. However, everyone can improve their appearance and their health and performance levels by implementing the principles of GHF.

Even if you have a genetic predisposition to being overweight, the way you live is what ultimately determines whether you become fat. Genes clearly play a role, but they certainly don't determine what you're going to have for dinner or how often you exercise. Chances are if you're living an unhealthy lifestyle, you'll become fat and unhealthy.

All of us can't be thin. But every single one of us can be healthy. By focusing on what you're eating and how much you're exercising, you'll be able to achieve optimum health and fitness, even though you may not achieve society's ideal of thinness. Accepting yourself does not mean that you're hopeless and that it's okay to do nothing. It means that you feel good and care about yourself, and that you want to be the very best you can be, regardless of your genetics, regardless of society's standards.

To achieve this level of optimum wellness, you must have a positive self image. This means that your feelings about your body are not influenced by events in your daily life. For many people, life's problems are projected onto their body. "If only I were thinner--or more muscular, I would have made the team, gotten the job, been chosen. . . . If only I were thinner--or more muscular, I could meet more people, find the right guy/girl, be happy." This self-defeating habit is reinforced by the images we see in advertising; your body becomes an easy target for everything wrong in your life.

When you have a positive self-image, you value and respect your body; you are also more likely to feel good about living a healthy lifestyle.

No matter how much genetics predetermines how you store and lose fat, the body you've been given will still respond positively to being appreciated and treated well. Focusing on fun physical activity and eating healthy foods will help you feel good whatever your size. Developing a healthy, positive image of yourself is the first critical factor in your fitness success. Having a strong sense of self-worth provides the basis for making rational and affirming decisions about your health.

2. Avoid the Negative; Choose the Positive

Negative self-talk is a destructive habit and part of an essential defense mechanism that we often develop to protect ourselves. Many people end up talking themselves out of actions that may be scary or uncomfortable. "I can't do this" is really just a way of saying "I don't want to deal with the experience of doing this." We are all strongly influenced by our feelings, often determining how and what action we

ultimately take. If the feeling is uncomfortable, negative self-talk results; then we often decide not to take any action at all.

Many people assume that if a past experience produced a certain result, there is nothing they can do to change that experience in order to produce a different result. "I've tried every diet there is. I know what I should do; I just can't do it."

Please understand that you can make the choice not to repeat old patterns of eating, non-exercise, and negative thinking. You have the ability to choose the emotions you have. If you don't like feeling guilty, frustrated, or doubtful, you can choose not to. You, and no one else, must decide what is comfortable for you. In order to become successful at making healthy choices, you must avoid negative self-talk and start practicing positive thinking.

Positive or negative self-talk plays a big part in your decisions. Be on the "look-out for negative self-talk and notice how it influences your choices; notice how it can negatively affect your efforts to change. For example, perhaps you've just returned from a week's vacation where you took a break from exercise and low-fat eating. You tell yourself, "I feel so fat. I'm back where I started." You feel guilty and frustrated. "I don't have enough will-power to start all over again. Maybe I'm just meant to be overweight." Feeling overwhelmed and discouraged, you give up.

First, reflect on the feelings you had before you decided to give up. You basically told yourself that the healthy habits you learned before your vacation were all for nothing and that you have to start over. Ask yourself if these feelings are reasonable. Are you really back to ground zero? Of course not. You accepted change and developed a new way of living; these skills are yours forever. The vacation might even have done you some good: everyone needs a break sometimes. Otherwise, you might have felt deprived and not really enjoyed yourself. It's time now to tell yourself: "It felt good eating whatever I wanted and taking a break from exercising; I had a great time. But now I'm going to focus back on the low-fat, active lifestyle I was enjoying before vacation. There is no reason to beat myself up; I'll just take it one day at a time." Now you can rethink your previous decision and take action that will move you forward towards more positive change.

As you begin to understand your reasons for negative self-talk, you'll find yourself recognizing it more and more quickly after it occurs. Eventually, as you practice, you'll be able to recognize and stop negative self-talk before it interferes with your decisions.

It is very important to practice positive thinking and to remind yourself that you're a worthwhile person whatever you do. Try to consistently acknowledge that you are making positive changes to improve your health. You should be proud of yourself. Visualize yourself as capable, happy, and confident. These positive feelings will help the process of change.

Remember, there are bound to be times when you're feeling frustrated or depressed. Positive thinkers know that these feelings are valid, and they don't try to ignore them. Positive thinkers acknowledge and

try to understand them, but they don't blame themselves for the conditions that lead to these feelings.

3. Accept Change as a Positive Force in Your Life

In order to be successful at leading a healthier lifestyle, you need to have knowledge and a good understanding of the best, most effective ways to do that. GHF will give you that. But we also want you to know that it's okay to be afraid and uncomfortable with this lifestyle change; that's natural. Changing old habits isn't easy. In general, people have a hard time adjusting to change. Change is made even more difficult when we're not certain we want the goals we have set out to achieve. Change is impossible when we set ourselves unrealistic goals.

But it truly is possible when we set realistic goals and when we make those changes gradually. If you have a willingness to work through the initial emotional discomfort as you move step-by-step into this new lifestyle, you'll find the confidence, commitment, determination, and belief in your own self-worth that will ease the way.

Healthy living means making important lifestyle changes, changes in the way you eat and exercise and, we hope you're coming to see, in the way you think. It may sound overwhelming at first, but it's really quite simple. Remember, these changes will be gradual. They'll also never be painful or hard to stick with. Many Americans have already successfully made the change to a healthy lifestyle. You can too, once you understand how easy it is.

Making the change to a healthier lifestyle is a process you will enjoy and can be proud of. The easiest way to go about it is to take it one step at a time. If you try to hurry change, chances are that it won't be permanent. It's important to understand that once you put into effect the lifestyle habits we are going to teach you, they are yours forever and will make a substantial impact on your life.

Once you truly believe that you have the ability to find a comfortable balance of food, activity and life attitudes, you can break free from diets forever. Action creates motivation. Once you understand and implement the non-diet approach of GHF, you will become successful. Once you start achieving great results, the excitement and fun you experience will make the change well worth the effort. Enjoying the many great benefits of a healthy lifestyle will help provide the impetus to stay on the healthy road you've taken.

4. There's No Such Thing as Cheating.

There's no right or wrong way to eat. Healthy eating is all about motivation, balance, and flexibility. To achieve a healthy balance, GHF's weight management program offers easy-to-understand and easy-to-follow recommendations. However, it will be up to you to adapt these recommendations to your life. There will be times when you eat a high-fat meal or eat beyond fullness, or when your schedule gets so busy that you miss a workout. This happens. It's normal. But it's very important that you don't get down on yourself and abandon your new healthy lifestyle when this happens.

If you're like most people, your reaction to these diet/fitness obstacles is guilt. You feel as if all your hard work has been for nothing. "I blew it; I was doing so well. Oh well, I might as well enjoy this weekend and start over on Monday." Or even worse: "I just don't have the motivation or will power to start over and be successful. I quit." Feeling defeated, many people discontinue the healthy living and return to their old routine until some mythical time in the future: "Maybe this spring will be a better time to start over again." This kind of scenario is a perfect example of the diet mentality at work.

An all-or-nothing attitude is why so many people have so little success; we choose structured programs because they relieve us from making choices for ourselves. A properly designed program makes sense, but expecting to stick to a structured eating and exercise plan for an extended period of time without ever deviating makes no sense at all. In fact, this is so unrealistic as to be a set-up for failure. If you begin to change your habits with the assumption that any deviation from your plan will ruin it, you might as well not even begin. Life is full of unplanned obstacles, distractions, and temptations. Your best approach is to prepare for them, keeping an open mind and maintaining a positive attitude.

It's very important that you begin your healthier lifestyle with an understanding that there will be days when you will stray from healthy eating and exercising. Before you begin, tell yourself that no matter what happens, rather than abandoning your new lifestyle, you'll resume your healthy habits as soon as you can; it is equally important that you feel confident, not guilty, about doing so. Whatever the temptation or obstacle is, keep in mind that it's not wrong or bad to eat fattening foods once in a while or to miss a workout. Just remember to resume your healthy lifestyle. If you keep moving forward and you don't let guilt and discouragement stop your program all together, you'll eventually have improved eating and exercise habits.

With this approach, there is no such thing as cheating. When we feel we are cheating, we often punish ourselves; we make ourselves feel guilty, frustrated and defeated. Replacing the negative concept of "cheating" with the idea of "straying from healthy habits" takes away the all-or-nothing emphasis on right and wrong. If you treat every deviation from your plan as a failure, you won't get very far.

Substituting the idea of a brief straying away from your plan instead of feeling guilty, and learning to return more and more quickly to healthier habits, is more realistic. It's also easier and more enjoyable.

5. There are No "Good" or "Bad" Foods.

In the GHF non-diet approach, all foods are legal. There are no "good" foods or "bad" foods. You must believe this. Sudden changes and/or drastic restrictions of high-fat foods when you have a preference or craving for fat will result in feelings of deprivation. No one can or should go through life depriving themselves of foods they really enjoy. You must learn how to make gradual healthy changes to the foods you love while experimenting with and learning to appreciate new flavors and textures.

A recent survey showed that more than 75 percent of people feel guilty about eating so-called "bad"

foods. The greatest obstacle to adopting healthy eating habits is guilt. Attaching a value to foods only makes you feel bad for eating them. When you do decide to eat a high-fat food, enjoy it. Don't beat yourself up over it. Just make a special effort to eat low-fat the rest of the day. Remember, there is nothing wrong with splurging now and then. It can even be good for you if the satisfaction of a higher-fat meal that you've been craving helps you stick with a low-fat lifestyle the rest of the time.

6. Avoid Short-term Thinking: Successful Programs are for Life.

The GHF program is not a plan that you go on and start over when you've been "bad." You must become flexible enough to allow it to become a comfortable, enjoyable way of life. Then these healthier habits will work with you and for you rather than against you. As you experiment, you will discover what works best for you.

Diets teach us that changing our exercise and eating habits are short-term projects rather than an improved lifestyle. Headlines and advertisements everywhere read "Lose 30 pounds in 30 days," and most people believe them. They go on and off diets, start and stop exercise programs, and their weight--and self-esteem--go up and down. Unfortunately, most people don't realize that there is a real alternative to diets, so they jump back on the diet roller coaster when their weight goes back up or a new miracle diet comes on the market. Fortunately, you've found the GHF Weight Management program, which will allow you to be successful despite the many obstacles that life throws your way.

In order to break free from the diet mentality, you need to view these healthier changes you're making as part of a permanent lifestyle transformation. To gain the lasting benefits of this program, it is important to re-orient short-term thinking towards realistic goals.

Goal setting is a great way to stay motivated and achieve the results you deserve. Unfortunately, many people set goals simply to look better in the short run and not for the other many benefits a healthy lifestyle offers us in the long run. For example, setting a short-term goal of losing 10 pounds for a class reunion isn't helpful. Once the reunion is over, most people will either revert to their previous habits because the special event is over or simply quit all together because the goal they set was unrealistic.

Living a low-fat lifestyle and decreasing your body fat takes a long-term commitment. Trying to do it all at once, however, only makes you frustrated and discouraged. Instead, set a realistic long-term goal; then achieve it by reaching smaller, short-term goals. For example, if your goal is to decrease your body fat by 10 percent, shoot for modest goals, such as decreasing your body fat by one percent each month. Decreasing body fat slowly is not only the safest and most effective way, it is also the most realistic. Every goal, short-term or long-term, should be one that is truly attainable.

Every goal should also be one that you are in charge of. Setting a short-term goal where you are in charge, such as exercising four times a week, will help you achieve your long-term goal. Remember--and remind yourself: each time you reach a short-term goal, you are one step closer to achieving what you really want: a healthier, more attractive body.

7. Live Your Program One Day at a Time.

Focusing on how you're going to look and feel at some time in the future prevents you from enjoying the way you look and feel today. Focusing instead on the day-to-day process rather than the end result paradoxically brings about a better end result. Thinking only about the future reminds you of how far you still have to go rather than focusing on what you should do today.

If you happen to overeat, or eat a high-fat meal, or skip a workout, enjoy it; don't worry about it ruining your program or your future. Shift instead to living low-fat and healthy the rest of the day. By taking it one day at a time, you can do a better job of concentrating on what's working for you and what's not, how you're feeling and what you're thinking.

For example, perhaps you've just enjoyed a low-fat version of your favorite pizza, using healthy cooking techniques you recently discovered. You can't believe how great it tasted and how easy it was to prepare. Focusing on this present moment, when you're feeling satisfied, energized, and confident, helps you stay more balanced in your decision-making about food and exercise. On the other hand, reflecting on this scenario from a future focus might leave you feeling overwhelmed: "Boy, do I have a lot still to learn about healthy cooking. I'll have to experiment with my favorite foods for the rest of my life!"

Setting small goals and acknowledging all the small achievements on your path are essential to successful change. Remember to take it one day at a time.

8. Eating Should Always be a Pleasurable Experience.

If you're having a special diet meal that's different from what the rest of your family or friends are eating, you'll feel as though you're being punished. In order to be successful in changing your eating habits, you must look forward to and enjoy each meal you eat. This doesn't mean that you have to learn to like rice cakes and celery. It means you must learn how to make simple changes in the foods you love.

Perhaps one of your favorite meals is fried chicken, a baked potato, and salad. Small changes in how the food is prepared can turn this traditionally high-fat meal into a low-fat well-balanced one. Simply marinating a skinless chicken breast in sweet and sour sauce, rolling it in bread crumbs, and baking it makes the chicken a lot less fattening than if it's fried. Instead of butter or regular sour cream on your potato, try low-fat or nonfat sour cream or a reduced fat ranch dressing. Try using a non-fat or low-fat salad dressing rather than a regular dressing and adding as many vegetables to your salad as possible for their additional flavor, texture and nutrients. Any or all of these changes drastically reduce the amount of fat in the meal without sacrificing flavor or feelings of satisfaction.

We will discuss how to make other small, yet very effective, changes later; for now, just realize that healthy eating patterns can only occur when you're enjoying all the foods you eat. If you're eating low-fat foods just to be healthy but without enjoying the flavors and textures or how they make you feel, this

most likely won't be a permanent change. However, if you begin enjoying healthy foods, you're far more likely to stick with healthy eating for life.

Many people also enjoy eating out but associate this with being "bad" or eating "illegal" foods. Fortunately, it is very possible to eat a healthy, low-fat meal in a restaurant. You don't need to forego your favorite foods or eat before you go out with friends or family. The same decision-making process that we teach occurs whether you eat at home or go out to a restaurant. Many people think that they have two options when eating: eating for taste and pleasure or eating for health. As you learn and practice the healthy eating techniques of the GHF program, these two options will become one and the same.

9. Avoid Getting Stuck in the Weight Loss Obsession.

For many people, the primary motivation for adopting healthy eating and activity habits is to lose weight. They think that first they'll lose weight, then they'll feel better about themselves.

Please understand that these are two separate issues. One is body image: how we feel about our bodies. The other is weight loss. Many people start exercising and eating healthier for the sole purpose of looking better; if they don't see immediate improvements in their appearance, they decide it's not worth the trouble and quit. They ignore all the other great benefits of adopting a healthier lifestyle and forget that success takes time and commitment.

Remember, we are not all meant to be slim, trim, or beautiful. If you implement the health and fitness principles of GHF, you will see definite improvements in appearance, but exactly how much will be determined in part by your genetics. Pay attention to all the other improvements you are making: increasing your levels of confidence and energy, bettering your physical and psychological performance, and drastically reducing your risks for injury and disease. Our approach teaches you to revamp your goals of weight loss into goals of enjoying physical activity and healthy eating for their contributions to increased performance, energy, and well-being.

10. Take Time to Measure Your Progress.

Success can be measured on a number of levels. It's important to measure your progress by the new healthy habits you're adopting as well as by your appearance. Long-term decreases in medical problems, injury, and other health risks and an improved quality of life, with or without weight loss, are the most important measures of success.

Short- and medium-term changes can also be measured regularly during the process. These include obvious changes in health-related behavior patterns such as a decreased reliance on medications, increased ability to perform physical activity, a reduced intake of fat, and the increased intake of dietary fiber, vitamins, and minerals in your diet.

If you've started making slight changes in how your food is cooked or prepared, or if you're reading labels at the grocery store and are discovering new tastes and textures, you're making great improvements towards a healthier lifestyle. When you feel good about yourself and acknowledge the changes you're making along the way, you're more likely to keep moving forward on your path.

Physical indicators of progress towards a healthier body fat distribution include the waist circumference and waist-hip ration (WHR). Because abdominal obesity has consistently been associated with risk factors for diabetes and heart disease, any reduction in the waist circumference or in the WHR is a positive step towards a healthier body fat distribution, regardless of weight loss.

Another good way of determining physical progress is having your body fat measured by either hydrostatic weighing, electrical impedance, or simply by using body fat calipers. This latter is by far the cheapest and most accessible. Although it is not as accurate as the other two methods, it can at the very least give you a beginning point from which you can easily measure decreases in body fat. Please refer to the GHF Personal Trainer directory to find a certified personal trainer in your area that can measure your body fat percentage.

However you decide to measure your physical progress, never use the scale as an indicator. Your weight does not reflect how healthy you are or the progress you've made. When you step on the scale, your weight reflects the combined total of both your lean body weight (muscle, bone, organs, fluids) and body fat weight. Two people with identical body weights do not have the same body composition; they could, indeed, have entirely different body types. For example a 170-pound man might have 60 pounds of body fat and 110 pounds of lean body mass. A healthier, more muscular man might only have 25 pounds of body fat and 145 pounds of lean body mass. Even though these two individuals weigh the same, one is in much better shape than the other.

Using the scale to measure your progress gives you no information about the body composition (fat vs. muscle) changes that are actually occurring. The scale may show that you've lost seven pounds, but it can't tell you that half of the weight was muscle and water, not fat. Similarly, people become discouraged when they haven't lost any weight, even though they have actually lost pounds of fat and replaced them with pounds of firm, fat-burning muscle.

Developing healthier eating and physical activity habits will most likely result in a loss of body fat even though the scale may indicate that you weigh the same. Learn to use other methods of determining body composition and pay more attention to improvements in how you feel, in your self-esteem, and in your physical appearance.

Height/weight charts and other tables such as the BMI (Body Mass Index: weight in kilograms divided by height in meters, squared) have similar limitations when used as an indicator of progress towards a healthier lifestyle for several reasons. First, these formulas are not always related to how fat you are since they don't take into account body composition/fat distribution. Many people who are muscular or short and stocky have a high BMI, even though they are not necessarily fat or at high risk for disease. Second,

the BMI is only appropriate for adults 20-65 years of age. It cannot account for patterns of growth in adolescents or in the elderly, who may decrease in height with age. Third, the focus is still on changing one's weight to produce a lower BMI (since it's not possible to increase one's height). This continues to promote weight change as the ideal way to improve health.

Don't forget to notice and acknowledge improvements in energy, performance, self-esteem, and the many other benefits you'll gain from this healthier lifestyle: improvements in health risk factors and medical conditions, improved quality of life and psychological functioning, healthier eating, and more enjoyable physical activity.

Now that we've discussed the important beliefs you must hold in order to be successful on the GHF program, we hope that you've forgotten about past failures--or rather, diets failing you. We hope too that you've accepted yourself, that you're willing to use positive thinking, and that you're looking forward to the many benefits that a healthy lifestyle has to offer you. We'll now expand on these non-diet principles by discussing psychological eating and how to learn to pay attention to internal signals of both hunger and fullness. We will also discuss normal/healthy eating and diet versus the non-diet approach to reducing fat intake, and to reducing food intake in general.

But it truly is possible when we set realistic goals and when we make those changes gradually. If you have a willingness to work through the initial emotional discomfort as you move step by step into this new lifestyle, you'll find the confidence, commitment, determination, and belief in your own self-worth that will ease the way.

Healthy living means making important lifestyle changes, changes in the way you eat and exercise and, we hope you're coming to see, in the way you think. It may sound overwhelming at first, but it's really quite simple. Remember, these changes will be gradual. They'll also never be painful or hard to stick with. Many Americans have already successfully made the change to a healthy lifestyle. You can too, once you understand how easy it is.

Making the change to a healthier lifestyle is a process you will enjoy and can be proud of. The easiest way to go about it is to take it one step at a time. If you try to hurry change, chances are that it won't be permanent. It's important to understand that once you put into effect the lifestyle habits we are going to teach you, they are yours forever and will make a substantial impact on your life.

Once you truly believe that you have the ability to find a comfortable balance of food, activity and life attitudes, you can break free from diets forever. Action creates motivation. Once you understand and implement the non-diet approach of GHF, you will become successful. Once you start achieving great results, the excitement and fun you experience will make the change well worth the effort. Enjoying the many great benefits of a healthy lifestyle will help provide the impetus to stay on the healthy road you've taken.

Mastering Psychological Hunger

Note: Much of the following section is adapted from Omichinski and Harris's Nondiet Weight Management: A Lifestyle Approach to Health and Fitness (Nutrition Dimensions, 1995)

Many diet plans tell you what to eat, how much to eat, and when to eat it. This does not teach you how to attend to your own cravings, desires, or hunger. This is, once again, symptomatic of the diet mentality, which teaches you nothing about living and feeling healthier and happier.

Everyone has different strengths, weaknesses, and eating patterns. You will only become successful when you learn to respond to your own feelings and not to what someone else says is right for you. It is critical that you learn how to be aware of and attend to both feelings of hunger and fullness, and learn what will satisfy you both physically and psychologically.

Many people have lost the skill of knowing how much they need to eat in order to feel energized and satisfied. This is simply because they have spent so much of their life following regimented eating programs. Your own body, not someone else's plan, is the very best guide for how much you need to eat.

Try to get in the habit of tuning in to your internal cues of hunger, and not just eating the amount of food you think you should, or tuning in to external cues like the sight or smell of food. It's okay to eat any amount of food to feel both physically and psychologically satisfied. But you must learn to stop when you feel comfortably full, not stuffed.

In addition to learning how it feels to be hungry, full, and uncomfortably full, you must learn from your mistakes. If you eat past comfortable fullness, don't beat yourself up about it. There are bound to be times when you eat too much for your body's comfort. Try to remember how eating too much feels, and remind yourself of this feeling the next time you are tempted to overeat. With practice, you will change your eating patterns and start eating when your body tells you you're hungry, and stop eating after you're gained a satisfied, energized feeling.

To implement a successful weight management program and a healthier lifestyle, you need to be flexible and to learn from your mistakes. You need to learn how to listen to your body and find out what is really causing you to eat. Only you can uncover the reasons for your eating habits and learn new techniques to deal with them more positively.

Many people are "cue-sensitive" to food: if there are food reminders, they are likely to eat. For example, if they often eat dinner on the couch in front of the television, they are sending themselves messages to eat each time they sit there, whether they're hungry or not. If this is true for you, try eating only at the dining table.

Many dieters who are cue-sensitive tend to have "all-or nothing" thinking: "I blew my diet today anyway so I might as well just have another piece of cake. Since I'll have to start over tomorrow, I might as well have fun today." Dieters also often refrain from eating "bad" foods simply because their "all-or-nothing"

response is "I'm on a diet so I can't eat those illegal potato chips." After being deprived for a while, they give in and are unable to control themselves. This "all-or-nothing" thinking leads to frustration and doesn't allow enjoyment of life's many pleasures.

In addition to cue sensitivity, many people have problems with "automatic eating," eating that occurs unconsciously. For example, suddenly, the bag of candy is empty without their even realizing it. Studies show that the most satisfaction comes from the first and last few bites of what we eat and that the bites in between are automatic. In other words, we eat the bites in the middle just because they are there, not because we are actually enjoying them; the middle bites give us very little satisfaction. Often we eat them because of the external cue of seeing the food. Using the GHF approach, you will become more selective and eat only what you really want. The following scenario will help illustrate this.

Two friends go to a movie theater snack bar. John is hungry and really craves a candy bar, so he gets one. Jack yearns for a candy bar but since he is on a diet, he orders a diet soda instead. John tastes and savors the candy bar, and a third of the way through it, he's satisfied and doesn't eat the rest. He isn't hungry anymore and he knows he can have another any time he wants; there is no need to eat after he's satisfied. On the other hand, when Jack gets home from the movie, he eats a bunch of cookies, and he eats beyond fullness. He really wanted a candy bar at the movies, but it was an illegal food on his diet. So when he gets home, he tries to find something to satisfy his craving.

Usually these dieters eat more calories in replacement foods than if they had eaten the desired food in the first place. In addition, calories "don't count" for many dieters if no one else sees them eat. Or a dieter will decide to eat the "bad" food because they've been deprived of it for so long. They eat it guiltily, in secret, or they eat it too fast. They don't feel totally satisfied so they end up bingeing on even more "forbidden" foods. All these aspects of the diet mentality contribute to eating more, not less.

On the other hand, people using the GHF approach are selective, eating only what they really want to eat. They learn to eat a candy bar if they're hungry and that would satisfy their hunger or to have just a diet soda if that would satisfy them. Recognizing and adhering to feelings of satiety and fullness will help you learn to eat what you need, whether it's the whole candy bar or just a piece.

The GHF approach encourages other good habits. Try to eat slowly and attentively, and only when physically hungry rather than completely starved. This helps prevent both cue-sensitivity and automatic eating. Eating slowly also gives you time to enjoy your food and to find an internal stopping place where you start to feel full. The most wonderful and delicious food in the world won't be enjoyable if you eat so fast that you don't appreciate its quality.

Before going back for seconds, take a breather. Give your body 10-20 minutes to decide if you really are still hungry or if you are already physically or psychologically satisfied. Eating more slowly, pausing throughout the meal, and waiting before taking a second helping are not tricks to get you to eat less but rather ways for you to develop sensitivity in detecting hunger and fullness. They are strategies to encourage attentive eating that is more likely to be satisfying.

It is very important to confront your true desire and learn to meet your needs. Most dieters feel that they shouldn't have a candy bar because it's "illegal"; it's not on the diet list of allowed foods. Dieters think that restraint from having a candy bar and not responding to the external cue will make it easier to remain in control. Dieters use denial to deal with the situation.

Those who use our approach learn to cue into their body's signals to check for actual hunger. If their blood glucose level is low or if they are really hungry, they will choose to have a healthy snack first, knowing that they can still have the candy bar later on. Eating a candy bar on an empty stomach when blood glucose is low may lower it even further after the initial high. This can make it very tough to stop at just one candy bar. If you eat the candy bar after a healthy snack, it will have less effect on the blood glucose level because it will take longer to get into your bloodstream. And you will most likely eat much less than if you eat the candy bar when you are very hungry.

Also, GHF clients eat foods they like, not just the food that's there. If the candy bar available is a Kit Kat® but they prefer a Snickers®, they may choose not to eat one at all because they simply don't like Kit Kats®. Ask yourself: Do I really want this food or do I think I want it simply because it's there? Or because eating one (or two or three) is a habit? Repeatedly confronting the urge to eat the food will give you the confidence to turn into your natural body signals. You must believe in yourself. Listen to your body with regard to physical and psychological hunger. This will help you distinguish between what you really want and what you think you want due to habit.

Confronting the urge to eat doesn't mean total denial. It means that you will be satisfied with a few cookies rather than the whole batch, if you allow yourself to taste and savor them without feeling guilty. Confronting the urge to eat also means tuning into your needs. Confrontation applies to any aspect of life, not just food. People often eat for other, non-food-related reasons.

If you find yourself eating for reasons other than physical hunger, you are probably eating to satisfy psychological hunger--you may be upset, frustrated, or lonely. This will cause you to not focus on the food but rather only to use the food as a crutch to help with a certain situation. People often experience automatic eating at these times because in this state, they often eat a lot--a whole carton of ice cream, for example--without realizing it or paying attention to signals of fullness. They are preoccupied with their psychological problem.

You must become aware of your hunger and fullness and only eat the foods you enjoy. This allows you to be selective with your eating and tune into what you really want. You will become more conscious of the reasons behind your eating.

Once you've mastered the information presented in this section, you will greatly empower yourself. Mastery will allow you to make the choices and be in charge of your life and your eating. These skills will last a lifetime and can be applied to every aspect of your life.

Learning to Eat Healthy Foods

Dieting is so common in society that many people have very restrictive ideas about what is healthy and natural in eating. Healthy eating means being flexible; it depends on internal cues (hunger) rather than external cues (sight or smell) to regulate it. Healthy eating means being able to eat when hungry and to continue eating until you are both physically and psychologically satisfied. It means being able to make small, healthy changes to the foods you love and to eat them until you get enough--not just stopping because a diet plan says so, or because you think you should. Healthy eating means using moderate restraint in your food selection but not being so restrictive that you miss out on foods you enjoy.

Healthy eating means leaving half your dessert on your plate because you have recognized you are full and satisfied. But it also means sometimes eating beyond fullness; what's important is not feeling guilty about it and learning from the situation. Healthy eating takes time and attention to learn but it is an important priority in a healthy life.

Healthy eating varies in response to your hunger, emotions, schedule, and accessibility to food. If you have been used to following a diet, you may find our weight management program a bit hard to accept since there is not a rigid plan to follow. In our plan, focus, attention, and flexibility replace structure.

The methods described in this section are intended to help you learn how to be responsible for your own eating; they are not intended to promote under-eating. Part of the philosophy of listening to one's body and tuning in to taste and texture involves making small, gradual changes, one step at a time. It is very important to be conscious of how your body is feeling. As you become more and more aware of your body, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are you allowing yourself to taste, savor, and enjoy your meal?
- Are you accommodating taste preferences by making slight changes?
- Are you focusing on the texture of your meal?
- Are you allowing yourself to become physically and psychologically satisfied?
- Are you eating balanced meals regularly?

Why Eating Excessive Amounts of Fat Makes us Fat

While most of us know that consuming excessive amounts of fat will make us fat, we don't all understand exactly why this is true. To implement a successful weight management program, you need a good understanding of fat and why this nutrient makes us fat.

The amount of energy a particular food has depends on the quantity of fat, carbohydrates, and protein it contains. Food energy, both in its consumption and expenditure, is measured in terms of calories. Foods are either made up of fats, protein, carbohydrates, or a combination. A food that contains mostly fat will contain more than twice the calories than a food containing mostly carbohydrates and/or protein. For example, compare a serving of low-fat yogurt to a serving of nonfat yogurt--the low-fat yogurt has quite a few more calories than the nonfat variety because every gram of fat has more than twice the calories of

a gram of protein or carbohydrate. Fat contains 9 calories per gram; protein and carbohydrates yield only four calories per gram. Therefore, it is important that you move towards replacing foods high in fat with foods higher in protein and complex carbohydrates. These and other low-fat strategies are explained in the following weight management section. For a further detailed explanation of fat, carbohydrates, and protein, and the recommended daily amounts and food sources of each, please refer to the Global Health and Fitness (GHF) Nutrition component.

No more than 25 percent of your total calories should come from fat, fewer than 10 percent from saturated fat, the most damaging form discussed in detail in the GHF Nutrition component. A recent study of 23 lean men and 23 obese men found little difference in the total number of calories each group consumed. But the obese men consumed, on average, more than 33 percent of their total calories from fat, compared with 29 percent for the lean men. Because the body converts dietary fat into body fat more easily than it converts protein and carbohydrates into body fat, the obese men were storing more fat even though both groups consumed the same total number of calories.

During the process of converting protein and carbohydrates to fat, your body uses them as energy and burns more than a quarter of their calories; it takes more energy (calories "burned") to convert carbohydrates and protein into body fat than it does to convert dietary fat into body fat. Thus, more carbohydrate and protein calories are used and fewer are stored as fat. Dietary fat, on the other hand, goes straight into storage, with very few calories being used. For example, John consumes 2,000 calories a day of which 40 percent come from fat. If John replaces half of the fat calories (20 percent of total calories) with calories coming from complex carbohydrates, less food will be converted to body fat even though the total number of calories consumed has not changed.

It is important to note that when that 20 percent of the 2,000 calories from fat now comes from carbohydrates (or protein), you consume a lot more food, since each gram of carbohydrate or protein contains less than half as many calories per gram. Therefore, when you begin to decrease the amount of fat in your diet and replace it with carbohydrates and protein, even if you still consume the same amount of food as before, you will be consuming a lot fewer calories.

If dietary fat were easy to control, most "diets" would probably succeed. Even with the recent explosion of low-fat and nonfat products, people generally still eat too much fat. The reason is simple: We have grown up loving fat, and we are accustomed to its taste and texture. Although most people do not usually crave fat as they do sugar or salty foods, we do have a strong taste preference for fat. Fat is responsible for the flavor and texture of many of our favorite foods: meats, cheese, dressings, sauces, creams, desserts, etc.

Because a high-fat diet increases fat storage and yields more than twice the amount of calories, the most effective way to reduce body fat is to concentrate on reducing your daily fat intake. Even if you do not consciously lower your total caloric intake, making the switch to a low-fat diet will most likely result in fat loss. However, attempts to suddenly restrict high-fat foods when you still have a strong preference for them causes feelings of deprivation which may, in turn, cause a higher intake of fat than normal. Deprivation is part of the "diet" process, and one of the main reasons it is doomed to fail. It is very

important to make gradual, healthier changes to the foods you enjoy. Drastic changes backfire. When people base their food choices on the number of calories consumed and a "foods allowed/not allowed" list, the focus is on numbers rather than satiety and enjoyment of the foods' taste and texture. This often negates any positive effect the original focus on choosing low-fat foods may have had. Simply counting calories and grams of fat does not make for a permanent healthy lifestyle change. If tastes do not shift to enjoying foods lower in fat, this quickly becomes too restrictive and normal eating habits resume.

We are not saying that you should avoid counting grams of fat altogether. The way to lower fat in your diet is to become a fat-conscious eater--and this requires that you know the amount of fat in each food. However, instead of counting fat grams and deciding if it is a "good food" or a "bad food," try to balance the foods you are eating so that you average 25 percent or less of your total calories from fat each day. It's okay to have a piece or two of high-fat pizza (pizza can be low-fat) if you are truly hungry and craving it, as long as you balance that out with low-fat foods at other meals soon after. What's crucial is to learn how to make small healthier changes. Consume fat in moderation by balancing higher fat foods with lower fat foods.

One of the best ways to cut down on total fat and saturated fat when shopping or eating is to set a daily fat budget. Use this budget however you want. If you go out to lunch and have a craving for your favorite dessert, go ahead. Just remember that in order to meet your daily budget, you will need to make a conscious effort to keep your fat intake especially low throughout the rest of the day. To figure out your total fat budget (25 percent of total calories from fat) simply multiply your body weight times .45. So, if you weigh 150 pounds, your total fat intake for the day shouldn't exceed 67.5 grams.

Remember, however, that this is only a general guideline to help you keep your fat intake in a range to promote healthy living. If you go over your budget, do not beat yourself up about it--you'll have an opportunity to level it out over the next few days. More importantly, never use all-or-none thinking, believing that if you have gone over, you might as well enjoy yourself and binge and start over some other day. The key to low-fat living is to be flexible, to get in tune with your body, to do your best, and to continue to learn how to enjoy healthy eating and physical activity.

At home, you can eat only what is available. For your weight management program to be successful, you must master the art of low-fat shopping. If what you have in your refrigerator and cupboards is junk food, chances are you'll eat that in place of healthy, low-fat foods that satisfy and provide energy.

Understanding Labels and Health Claims

Before you head to the store, you should have a clear understanding of how to read labels so you can make the healthiest, wisest choices of foods you will enjoy. The following are key words for properly understanding food product labels:

Serving size: The amount of food the information refers to.

Servings per container: The number of servings in the entire product or package.

Percent daily values: Shows how a food fits into an overall daily diet based on a daily intake of 2,000 calories.

Calories: The total number of calories in one serving of this food.

Calories from fat: The total number of calories from fat in one serving of this food.

Total fat: The weight of fat (in grams) in one serving of this food.

Saturated fat: The weight of saturated fat (in grams) in one serving of this food.

Sodium: The weight of sodium (in milligrams) in one serving of this food.

Protein: The weight of protein (in grams) in one serving of this food.

Total carbohydrates: The weight of both complex and simple carbohydrates (in grams) in one serving of this food.

Sugars: The weight of simple carbohydrates (in grams) in one serving of this food; to find out how many complex carbohydrates are in the food simply subtract sugars from total carbohydrates.

After you have a clear understanding of the key label words, there are five other important values you will want to consider before concluding that the food product is a healthy, low-fat food.

1. Check the List of Ingredients.

Ingredients are listed in descending order according to their quantity in that food. The first three or four ingredients listed usually make up most of the product. Keep in mind, however, that fat and sugar come in many different forms; even if they are not one of the first three ingredients, the food can still be very high in fat and/or sugar. Other "names" of fat include hydrogenated vegetable shortening, butter, margarine, oil (coconut, safflower, palm, etc.), lecithin, lard, and cream solids. Other names of sugars include fructose, honey, corn sweeteners, molasses, maltose, corn syrup, fructose, galactose, glucose, and dextrose. If only one of these names appears among the first few ingredients on the label, or if several of them are listed throughout the label, this food is likely to be high in fat or sugar.

2. Pay Attention to Total Fat and Saturated Fat.

When checking the label of a food, always check the line that reads "total fat." Most experts believe you should get no more than 25 percent of total daily calories from fat. For someone who weighs 160 pounds,

that would be about 72 grams a day. So before purchasing any food, check the total fat to see if that product fits into your eating plan.

Right below the "total fat" line is "saturated fat." Again, you want this number to be very low, since this type of fat is linked to obesity and heart disease. No more than 10 percent of your calories should come from saturated fats. For the average person, this is between 7-10 grams a day.

3. Figure Out the Percentage of Calories from Fat.

In addition to listing the ingredients, labels give you the information you need to determine the percentage of calories from fat in a specific food product. Knowing this is actually far more important than simply knowing the number of grams of fat in the food product. Just as you want less than 25 percent of your total daily calories to be from fat, you also want to try to eat foods that get less than 25 percent of their total calories from fat. Because a food product has a low number of fat grams, it is not necessarily a low-fat, healthy food. Take, for example, a reduced-fat whipping cream. Many people assume that since this product only has 1.5 grams of fat per serving that it is a healthy dessert topping (often justifying double or triple the amount on their dessert). However, this product contains actually 45 percent fat. On the other hand, a common nutrition bar has 5 grams of fat per serving. Many dieters would not touch this product for fear of so much fat, when, in actuality, this product contains only 12 percent fat. How can a food that only has 1.5 grams of fat per serving have a higher percentage of fat calories than a product that contains 5 grams of fat. It is quite simple: The whipped topping only contains 30 calories per serving whereas the nutrition bar contains 380. The nutrition bar is packed with protein and carbohydrates, giving the product a lot more nutritious food value and more calories. Since the whipped topping only contains 30 calories, it has very little nutritional value and quite a bit of fat relative to the total volume of food and calories. When checking labels, be sure to figure out the percentage of fat calories in addition to the number of fat grams.

To determine the percentage of calories from fat of a food product, look for two important numbers: calories per serving and total grams of fat per serving. Since you want to know what percentage of the total calories are fat calories, you must first convert the grams of fat into calories. Remember, there are 9 calories per gram of fat.

To calculate the fat percentage of the food:

- a) Multiply the number of grams of fat by the number 9 (9 calories per gram of fat).
- b) Divide this number by the total calories per serving.
- c) The result is the percentage of fat calories (should be less than 25).

4. Pay Attention to Serving Size.

When you see that your favorite frozen yogurt only has 4 grams of fat per serving, be sure to check the serving size. The FDA has decided that a single serving of yogurt is only 1/2 cup. Most people eat at least 1 1/2 cups of their favorite yogurt or ice cream and thus in this example, eat 12 grams of fat. Before you buy any food, multiply a realistic serving size times the total grams of fat. If the food comes up high in fat, you may want to either limit the serving size or purchase something else.

5. Pay Attention to Fiber.

Move down the label until you come to "dietary fiber." Fiber is very beneficial to the human diet. A diet rich in fiber promotes fat loss when these high-fiber foods replace fats and sweets. This is possible because fibrous foods offer fewer calories per gram (4 calories/gram) than fat (9 calories/gram) are not easily converted to fat, and have the ability to expand up to 10 times their weight and size in the stomach. Thus, fiber makes us feel fuller and satisfied for a longer time. Fiber can give you an edge on weight management not only by satisfying your appetite, but also by slowing down calorie absorption and sustaining your energy levels. In addition, a high-fiber diet helps prevent hemorrhoids, diarrhea, appendicitis, and colon cancer. Fiber also helps lower cholesterol levels, decreasing the risk of heart disease. Most experts recommend that you get at least 25-30 grams of fiber a day. Therefore, when reading labels, remember, higher is always better.

Of course, not everything you'll want to eat or drink will be labeled. For example, nutrition labeling for many foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables or fresh meat, poultry and fish is voluntary. And labeling on packaged foods under 12 square inches, such as miniature candy bars, is also voluntary. Remember, you are not counting and figuring out the fat percentage to decide if you should eat that food, but rather to learn from experience and become a more conscious eater. The more you practice and experience, the more you will learn and the easier it will be to gradually modify and decrease the fat in your foods.

In addition to having a clear understanding of a product's nutrition label, you should also understand exactly what the different health claims on products mean. The following is a list of health claims that are often misinterpreted by consumers:

Free: Example: fat-free. This means that the food product has so little of the nutrient in it that it would not even show up on your dietary screen (usually $>.5$ gram/serving).

Low: Example: low-calorie or low-fat. This means that the food product does not have much of a certain nutrient, but it has enough to make a difference in your diet. Specifically, low-fat means 3 grams or less of total fat; low-saturated fat means one gram or less; low-cholesterol means less than 20 milligrams; and low-calorie means 40 calories or fewer per serving.

Lean: This term refers to meat. Lean means one serving has less than 10 grams of total fat, 4 grams of saturated fat, and 95 milligrams of cholesterol.

Extra lean: This term also refers to meat. This means that one serving has less than 5 grams of total fat

and 2 grams of saturated fat.

Less: This means there is 25 percent less of a certain ingredient or nutrient as compared to a similar product.

Reduced: This means the product was nutritionally altered to meet a health claim.

Shopping for low-fat, healthy food products and ingredients is absolutely critical to the success of your weight management program. When you come home from a hard day's work, the very last thing you'll want to do is slave over the stove cooking and preparing a healthy meal. You must develop a plan each week and have foods that are healthy and easy to put together in ten minutes or less. A great strategy for low-fat living is spending an hour or two each weekend preparing meals for the upcoming week so you can simply pop it in the microwave when you get home.

Before you go shopping, make a list of all the healthy meals and foods you enjoy eating. Also, check the pantry, refrigerator, and freezer for snacks and foods you'll need for low-fat recipes. Refer to the GHF Healthy Recipes for new ideas. Taking time to create a healthy shopping list of foods you enjoy will help prevent you from making fattening impromptu choices.

The following are low-fat shopping strategies for each of the food groups.

Fruits and Vegetables

You should try to eat at least three to five servings of both fruits and vegetables every day. A serving is any of the following: 1/2 cup chopped vegetables, a cup of salad, 3/4 cup 100 percent fruit juice, a medium-size piece of whole fruit, 1/4 cup of dried fruit or 1/2 cup fruit. Fruits and vegetables are so valuable in our diet because they are rich in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. In addition, they also contain antioxidants and phytochemicals which have been shown to prevent cancer, heart disease, strokes, and other diseases.

Make a list of all the fruits and vegetables you enjoy eating. Think of ways to include fruits and vegetables in convenient, healthy, snacks. Carrots, celery, apples, bananas, oranges, mango, kiwi, and berries are great choices. Also, decide which fruits can be added to other snacks to enhance flavor. For example, bananas and dried fruits can be added to cereal or low/nonfat yogurt. Also think of ways to add more fruits and vegetables to your recipes or meals. Think of all the fruits and vegetables that you could add to your turkey or cheese sandwich: sprouts, onions, tomatoes, pickles, mushrooms, lettuce, etc. Try adding some of your favorite vegetables to your spaghetti sauce or to a home-made healthy nacho. Keep experimenting with ways to include both fruits and vegetables into your daily routine. This will not only add flavor and texture to your meal; it will help you get the nutrients you need for a healthy diet. The following suggestions are ways to incorporate fruits and vegetables into every meal.

Breakfast:

- Instead of coffee, drink eight ounces of orange or grapefruit juice.
- Put a half cup of fruit (sliced bananas, strawberries, blueberries, dates, raisins, or other dried fruits) on your cereal, pancakes, or yogurt.
- Cut up your favorite vegetables and mix them in with scrambled eggs or in an omelet.

Snacks:

- Instead of soda, have an 8-oz. glass of vegetable juice, grape juice, apple juice, lemonade, or cranberry juice.
- Try low/nonfat fruit bars or dried fruits such as apples, mangos, pineapples.
- Always keep fruits (apples, bananas, grapes, oranges, etc.) and cut vegetables (carrots, celery, cucumbers, etc.) in convenient places such as your briefcase, gym bag, desk drawer, etc.
- Mix fresh fruits and/or dried fruits with yogurt, frozen yogurt, low-fat granola, cereal, and Jell-O®.

Lunch:

- Have a salad. Add as many of your favorite vegetables as possible. A large salad with mixed vegetables can count for 2-3 servings.
- Add as many of your favorite vegetables to your sandwich as possible.
- Eat a bowl of minestrone or vegetable soup.
- Include fruits and cut-up vegetables with your lunch.
- Have a baked potato without butter or sour cream. Try it with low/nonfat cheese, nonfat sour cream, sweet and sour sauce, salsa, or fat-free salad dressing.

Dinner:

- Make vegetables a part of the main dish: Add vegetables to chicken or tofu stir-fry. Add plenty of vegetables to a low-fat lasagna.
- Instead of pepperoni or Canadian bacon, add your favorite vegetables to a pizza with low-fat cheese.

Desserts:

- Slice berries, kiwi, or bananas onto frozen yogurt or nonfat ice cream.
- Add berries, kiwi, bananas, or other fruits to the top of angel food or other low-fat cakes.
- Add your favorite fruit to Jell-O® or puddings.

Dairy Products

Dairy products are rich in calcium, protein, and vitamin D. Three cups of milk, three cups of yogurt, or three to five ounces of cheese will cover your daily value of calcium. However, the requirements for women, especially post-menopausal women increases to four to five servings of calcium rich foods. Adequate calcium intake provides strong teeth and bones and may also help prevent colon cancer and high blood pressure. If you are a vegan, are lactose intolerant, or just don't like milk, other great sources of calcium are broccoli, kale, and turnip greens. Unfortunately, milk and other dairy products can be very high in fat and cholesterol. Whole milk gets almost half of its calories from fat, and most cheeses contain more than 50 percent fat. However, today there are nutritious low or nonfat versions of just about every dairy product you can name. The following is a list of foods that are very healthy, delicious, and essential for a healthy lifestyle.

Yogurt

A cup of yogurt provides 300 to 450 milligrams of calcium which is 20-40 percent of your daily requirement. It is also a great source of B vitamins, phosphorus, and potassium. Low-fat or nonfat yogurt is a great food for three different purposes: it is a great substitute for both sour cream and whipping cream; it supplies great taste and texture to many foods such as a baked potato or angel food cake; it is a great snack (especially when you add fruits such as bananas, berries, dates, etc.). Be sure to choose low-fat or nonfat varieties. Regular yogurt gets almost 50 percent of its calories from fat. If you are lactose intolerant try using yogurt as your primary dairy product because the cultures aid in digestion.

Cheeses

Cheeses make great toppings for many foods. Almost everyone loves the taste and texture of cheese. Unfortunately, cheese is loaded with fat. Most cheeses average between 40-60 percent of calories from fat. Try a low-fat version of your favorite cheese, and/or cheeses of the part-skim variety (mozzarella, ricotta, cottage cheese, low/nonfat cream cheese, etc.). If you are used to eating regular cheeses, don't expect low or nonfat cheeses to meet your standards at first. Eventually, you will develop a taste for a very low-fat or even nonfat version. Once again, however, make the change gradually. Try mixing low-fat with nonfat cheese before jumping straight to the nonfat version. You may also want to first try switching to white cheeses such as mozzarella, ricotta, Swiss, and parmesan. These are lower in fat because they are made with low-fat milk instead of whole milk.

Milk

If you drink whole or 2 percent milk, gradually make a switch to 1 percent and perhaps even skim (nonfat) milk. Whole milk gets 35-45 percent of its calories from fat; 1 percent only gets 23 percent and nonfat supplies only 4 percent of calories from fat, and all of the good stuff is still left in. You may also want to try several brands of skim milk; some are more palatable than others. Make the switch to a lower-fat version gradually by mixing the type you are used to with the next lowest in fat. For example, if you drink 2 percent milk, mix half a cup of 2 percent with half a cup of 1 percent. Once you have developed a preference for this mixture, try a glass of 1 percent, and so on.

Eggs

Eggs are a great source of calcium and protein. However, each egg contains 5 grams of fat and 210 milligrams of cholesterol. Eating only two eggs a day would put you well over the recommended daily limit of 300 milligrams of cholesterol. It is also recommended that you don't exceed four whole eggs a week. Egg whites (eggs without the yolk) are fat and cholesterol free and contain almost all of the protein. For cooking and baking, simply use three egg whites for every whole egg. For example, instead of using three eggs for an omelet, try using three egg whites and one whole egg. There are also low-fat egg substitutes that you can buy for cooking and baking.

Meats

Unfortunately, no other food in the American diet is higher in fat than red meat. In addition, pork products are also high in fat. Beef and pork are not only high in total fat; they are also high in saturated fat and cholesterol. High consumption of these meats has been shown to increase heart disease, obesity, cholesterol, and colon cancer. This does not mean you have to avoid meat altogether, but you will want to eat it in moderation and gradually switch to the leaner meats: chicken, turkey, and fish. There are really two things to look for if you want to continue eating red meat and still live a low-fat, healthy lifestyle: portion size and fat content. You should not eat more than three ounces of lean meat a day, roughly the size of a deck of cards. Many people are afraid of becoming protein-deficient when cutting back on meats. But only 12-20 percent of the calories in your diet should be protein. If you are eating 2,500 calories a day, you will need approximately 300-500 calories of protein, or 75-125 grams of protein. Three ounces of lean meat and a serving of a dairy product will satisfy that.

To select the leanest beef, check the label. Meat marked "select" is the leanest (39 percent fat). The "choice" grade has more (44 percent fat); and "prime" is the fattiest (48 percent fat). Also, when selecting ground beef, choose varieties labeled "round," "loin," "top sirloin," or "extra lean" because they are the leanest.

In addition to labels, check the meat itself for fat and color. Look for cuts with the least amount of visible fat. Meat with white streaks of fat is obviously going to be much higher in fat. Also, if the meat is really dark red, it is a lot leaner than meat that is pink or gray.

In general, chicken and turkey are leaner than beef and pork, but you still need to compare the fat content for each one. Some ground beef, for example, is leaner than chicken or turkey. This is mainly because some chicken or turkey still has the skin on it, which is loaded with fat and cholesterol. In addition, the dark meat of chicken or turkey contains a lot more fat than the white meat. The legs and back of chicken and turkey are the dark meat. Try to stick to the breast (white meat) and do not eat the skin. Ground turkey (skinless, of course) can also be a great substitute for ground beef. Refer to the GHF Healthy Recipes for great meal ideas using chicken, turkey, and lean choices of ground beef.

When shopping for sandwich meats, stay away from salami, bologna, pepperoni, and bacon. Once again, try the leaner white meats such as chicken, fish, and turkey. You can also try lean versions of roast beef and ham.

Fish

Fish is generally a very healthy way to get protein and other important nutrients found in beef without also getting the fat and cholesterol. Fish contains all the essential amino acids. You only need to eat three ounces of fish every other day to satisfy your daily protein needs. Fish is also a good source of many vitamins, which you can't always get from plant sources.

Fish usually only contains 5-10 percent fat. Unless you fry it, drown it in tartar sauce or butter, or buy processed fish sticks or crab cakes, you can't go wrong with fish. Also, stay away from tuna packed in oil; tuna packed in water is almost fat-free. Even when you eat a more fattening fish, such as salmon, it is still only between 6-10 percent fat. When you consider that a cheeseburger is 45 percent fat, you are really eating a low-fat food no matter which fish you choose.

Even seafood considered to be high in cholesterol is better than eating red meat. Shrimp and lobster may be higher in cholesterol than other seafood, but their total fat is still only 1-2 percent. A three-ounce serving of shrimp (about 7 or 8 shrimp) has about 160 milligrams of cholesterol, about half of your recommended daily limit. Compare that to two eggs which contain more than 400 milligrams. As long as you are not eating shrimp, lobster, or crab in hollandaise or tartar sauce or fish that is fried or dipped in butter, you are much better off than eating beef or pork. Try flounder, trout, cod, catfish, or shark; if you want to satisfy your red meat craving, try swordfish, monkfish, or fresh tuna, all of which have a great meaty texture. Refer to the GHF Healthy Recipes for great ideas on how to make a delicious, healthy fish meal.

Canned Foods

The following list of canned foods make for delicious, healthy recipes. Keep them in stock.

Canned Vegetables

Canned vegetables make a very low-fat, nutritious addition to any meal; they are also quick and convenient. Vegetable soup, corn, green beans, and many others will add a quick zip to your meal. You don't have to use canned vegetables exclusively as a side dish. In fact, there are many other ways you can use canned vegetables. Add them to soups. Add them to a green salad. Throw some canned carrots, corn, and beans together with a marinade. Or mix some string beans or collard greens with onion and vinegar. Experiment with what works best for you.

Canned Beans

Beans are not only low in fat; they are also a good source of fiber, carbohydrates, protein, and other nutrients. They have a lot of the same nutrients as meat, without the fat and cholesterol. Canned beans are convenient and healthy, but they do contain sodium. Also, many canned refried beans contain lard and other added fats; most stores now carry nonfat, low-fat, low sodium, vegetarian refried beans--they still taste great. Both refried beans and black beans are great with rice, or in nachos, burritos, and enchiladas. Black beans are also wonderful in soups and salads. Baked beans go great with sandwiches, chicken, or garden burgers. Note: if the baked beans have added pork, they will be higher in fat; try getting vegetarian or low-fat kinds. You won't miss the fat at all.

Canned Soups

To enjoy the great tastes of soups while still keeping the fat down, go for the broth-based soups, like chicken noodle, minestrone, vegetable, and rice instead of cream-based soups, like clam chowder, cream of broccoli, or potato. Soups containing pasta and beans, like minestrone, will give you a nutritious boost and are very filling. Lentil soup is one of the best soups you can buy, since it is very low-fat and offers about 8 grams of fiber per serving.

Some soups have as much as 1,000 milligrams of sodium per cup, almost half of your recommended daily limit of 2,000 to 2,500 milligrams. However, more and more reduced-salt varieties are available too. It is important to understand the reduced-salt terms. "Sodium-free" means the product has less than five milligrams per serving, "very low sodium" means it has less than 35 milligrams per serving, and "low sodium" means it has 140 milligrams or less per serving.

Canned Fruits

Canned fruits are a quick and easy way to get good sources of vitamins, minerals, and fiber; they also are very convenient. In addition to eating the fruit right out of the can, be creative and add it to other healthy foods as well. Try mixing canned fruit with low/nonfat yogurt. Used canned berries or peaches as a topping on angel food or low-fat pound cake. Also, try placing canned pineapple rings around various meats and poultry.

Many of the fruits' nutrients are in the liquid that the fruit is packed in. This is because the nutrients dissolve in water. Many people drink the fruit liquid right from the can. There are also other ways you can use this nutrient-packed liquid without throwing it away. Cook or stir-fry vegetables in this juice. Put the left over fruit juice in ice cube trays and freeze it; you can eat the ice cubes plain or add them to drinks for extra flavor.

Grains and Pasta

Grains make up wonderful, healthy foods such as breads, cereals, pastas, and rice. It is important, however, to choose your grains wisely. Try whole grain products for their fiber. Fiber helps you avoid

cancer, helps lower your cholesterol, and helps your digestive track function properly. Try to get 25-35 grams of fiber a day. Unfortunately, fiber grams do not add up easily. Two slices of whole-wheat bread contain three grams. On average, a bowl of cereal has 2-3 grams though there are many tasty high-fiber cereals on the market. Again, read the label. A cup of enriched spaghetti contains 2-3 grams. And one bagel has 5 grams. Therefore, you should try to eat at least 6 to 11 servings of grains and cereals a day. In addition to fiber, whole grain foods also supply vitamin B and E and some trace minerals.

Baked Goods

Breads have varying amounts of fiber, between one and three grams per slice. When shopping for breads, look for products made from whole grains; these should have "whole wheat" or "whole grain" on the label. Don't be fooled by regular wheat bread; it is actually white bread. Since flour is made from wheat, it is a legitimate claim, but "wheat" bread is simply white bread with caramel coloring and a brown wrapper. It is certainly okay to eat breads not made from whole wheat, such as French bread, sourdough, rye, pumpernickel, and so on because they are a source of complex carbohydrates, which should make up about 60 percent of your daily calories.

Bagels also make a quick and easy breakfast or snack item. They are rich in complex carbohydrates and low-fat. Bagels come in a variety of flavors and are delicious with low/nonfat cream cheese or jam.

Muffins are often thought of as healthy, but check the label for fat, saturated fat, and the percentage of calories from fat before you buy. Most muffins are very fattening. There are, however, low and nonfat versions which still taste good and make great breakfast foods or snacks, especially bran varieties (high in fiber). Donuts and croissants are killers when it comes to fat. Some donuts contain as many as 17 grams of fat; croissants average 14 grams of fat. Donuts are fattening simply because they are deep fried in oil; croissants are fattening because the dough is repeatedly rolled and layered in butter.

Pasta

Pasta is both delicious and healthy, as long as you make smart choices. Some pastas have ingredients other than flour, which makes them nutritionally different. Some kinds of pasta contain egg, which means more fat and as much as 145 milligrams of cholesterol per serving. Others are made with either white flour, wheat or spinach and are enriched with extra nutrients. Try to replace egg noodles with wheat or spinach noodles; this will boost your nutritional intake. Many pasta sauces are high-fat. Creamy sauces, like alfredo, are loaded with fat. Meat sauces too can be high in fat. Instead, try tomato or marinara sauces; add your favorite vegetables for additional nutrients.

Rice

Rice comes in many varieties, but the most commonly used are white and brown rice. White rice is enriched and, therefore, provides more thiamin and iron. However, brown rice naturally supplies a good source of fiber, calcium, phosphorus, and vitamin E. Rice makes a wonderful side dish to any meal and

with steamed vegetables can make a hearty main dish. Rice is also good in casseroles or mixed with other foods, like beans. Try adding salsa or sweet and sour sauce to rice for more flavor. Several spices also go very well with rice, such as, cloves, curry powder, chili powder, and ginger.

Cereals

It is very important that you eat breakfast not only for energy but also to kick-start your metabolism. Cereal, especially with skim milk and added fruit (bananas, dates, berries), and juice is one of the best ways to start the day. It is quick and easy, a good source of essential nutrients, and it's much lower in fat than many other breakfast foods, like eggs, bacon, sausage, or donuts.

Some cereals have a nutritional edge over others. Check the labels for those that offer less sugar and are low-fat, and that have at least two grams of fiber per serving. If chosen wisely, cereals can be a great source of fiber. Unfortunately, many cereals high in fiber are low in taste. Stock your shelves only with cereals you like. This will greatly increase the chance you'll actually eat them. If you buy brands that you "should" eat but they taste like cardboard, chances are you'll skip breakfast altogether. Try adding fruits to your cereal. You might even want to buy two types of cereal: one low in fat and high in fiber, and one low in fat and a little higher in sugar, to make it more enjoyable. Mix these together and you have a delicious and healthy way to start the day.

Don't just limit cereal to breakfast. Cereals make great snacks. Try buying a jumbo package containing several tiny boxes of cereal. Put them in your brief case, gym bag, desk drawer, or car glove compartment; with low/nonfat milk, you've got a tasty low-fat snack. However, beware of "healthy" granola. Most people think of granola as natural and healthy. Unfortunately, even the low-fat varieties are higher in fat than most other cereals. However, low-fat granola is a great condiment when added to other cereals to make them a little tastier.

Herbs and Spices

Cutting down on fat and salt often leaves foods tasting bland. It is important to continually experiment with herbs and spices to discover what works best with the meals you enjoy most. Here is a list of herbs and spices and the healthy foods they go well with:

Basil and Oregano

These spices are great for tomato-based dishes like pasta sauces, soups, and pizza. Oregano is also very good with beef (extra lean); try it with hamburgers. Or try it with pork (extra lean), vegetables, and many kinds of seafood.

Curry Powder

This spice has a similar taste to butter and goes well with potatoes, rice, pasta, and chicken. It also works

well in place of salt. Some people enjoy it on popcorn!

Ginger

Ginger is a strong spice that goes very well with rice, Japanese noodles, chicken, lean beef, and carrots.

Red Pepper, Chili Pepper, and Paprika

All are all very good flavor enhancers. Red pepper is often used in stews, baked beans, pasta, and several seafood dishes. Chili pepper is milder and helps make chili powder, which goes very well with chili, rice, barbecue chicken, potato chips (baked/low-fat variety), dips, sauces, and Mexican foods. Paprika will color food as well as flavor it. It goes well on macaroni salads, potato salad, and on baked potatoes.

Garlic and Onion

Both come in different forms: powdered, granulated, ground, chopped, or sliced. If you actually want to see and feel the garlic or onion on your food, buy it whole, minced, chopped, or sliced. If taste alone is what you're after, powdered or granulated will work fine. Both onion and garlic go great on chicken, fish, lean beef, potatoes, vegetables, and pasta. Scientific research has shown that garlic may lower blood pressure, cholesterol, and prevent cancer.

Cinnamon

A sweet spice, cinnamon is very good in desserts. Cinnamon is a great way to add more flavor to low-fat desserts without more sugar. Nutmeg and allspice also work well. Cinnamon is also very tasty sprinkled on muffins, toast, and popcorn.

Other helpful spices include rosemary, sage, tarragon, marjoram, cumin, saffron, thyme, dry mustard, and dill, all of which work well with lean meats like chicken, fish, and beef.

Oils

When cooking with oil, use only small amounts, and replace those high in saturated fat with oil higher in unsaturated fat. Saturated fat clogs your arteries; you want to avoid saturated fat whenever possible and keep your total saturated fat calories to less than 10 percent of your daily food intake. Four oils are high in saturated fats: coconut, palm, palm kernel, and cocoa oil. You should not only avoid purchasing these oils, also stay away from commercial baked goods and processed foods made from them.

Unsaturated oils come in two types: monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. Mono-unsaturated oils include olive, peanut, and canola oils. Poly-unsaturated fats include corn, safflower, and sesame oils. There is little evidence that one is better for you than the other. Many studies, however, have shown that

one specific oil, olive oil, may lower levels of LDL ("bad") cholesterol. You can use olive oil as a substitute for every oil in the kitchen--not only for frying and sautéing, but for baking as well. Three different grades of olive oil are available: pure, virgin, and extra-virgin. Each one varies in taste and color. If you are shopping for an oil for stir-frying or baking, pure olive oil is the best. Virgin and extra-virgin oil are higher grades and are best for light sautés or for drizzling on pasta, vegetables, or bread.

Remember, no one says you have to use oil when cooking, baking, or as a topping. Try apple juice, apple sauce, cooking sherry, wine, and broth instead of oil for cooking. Or you might first want to try cutting back on the amount of oil a recipe calls for and add one of the above liquids. Nonfat salad dressings or marinara sauce can replace oil as a topping on salads, pastas, or bread. Pureed fruits and egg whites also work very well as oil replacements--refer to the backing section for more ideas.

Frozen Foods

It is very important to pay special attention to the labels on frozen foods.. Many products have few calories simply because they consist of smaller proportions. This is one of the ways manufactures keep the total amount of fat down. Concentrate more on percentage of calories from fat, not the total number of calories. Again, fewer calories may mean less food, not necessarily less fat.

As a rule, look for frozen dinners with 7 grams of fat or less; saturated fat should be 2-3 grams of fat or less. Make sure that the percentage of calories from fat is less than 25.

Since many of these products are very small in portion, they can be a great addition to a healthy, low-fat meal. For example, Budget Gourmet Light and Healthy® has a great rigatoni in cream sauce with broccoli and chicken. Put this on a baked potato and you've got a quick and healthy meal.

Other cautions on frozen foods:

Investigate the ingredients: Check the order of ingredients on the package. Not all meat in frozen food products is really all meat--some are mixed with soy or wheat products to make them lower in fat. If the frozen food product is supposed to be a cheese dish and cheese is not one of the first few ingredients, they are probably using other less nutritious ingredients such as zantham gum.

Check the sauce: Frozen vegetables or dinners with butter or cream sauce are almost always high in fat. Be wary of the all-in-one meals. Many of these frozen meals are very low in flavor and provide little satisfaction. You are better off getting a frozen rice or pasta meal and adding bread and a salad full of fresh vegetables. Many frozen meals have less than a 1/2 cup serving of vegetables.

Frozen desserts: For dessert, try frozen nonfat yogurt, fruit bars, sorbets, and popsicles. Don't forget, however, that these foods can be high in sugar and thus high in calories. Also, when checking the fat content on frozen dessert labels, pay close attention to the serving size. Your favorite low-fat yogurt may only have three grams of fat per serving, but that's for 1/2 cup. Most people eat at least 1-1/2 cups at a

sitting, which adds up to 9 grams of fat per actual serving.

Try making your own frozen dinners. This way you will always have a healthy meal prepared to heat up in the microwave. They will also taste a lot better and most likely be a lot healthier than store-bought meals. You have control over the nutritional value and you decide the portions.

It is not difficult to freeze your own delicious, healthy dinner. Each time you cook a good, low-fat meal, prepare enough for several more meals. Then break the "leftovers" into meal-size portions and keep them in the freezer. Here's a list of healthy homemade food ideas:

Next time you make a pasta meal, cook all of the noodles. Store the noodles with your favorite tomato or marinara sauce in a plastic container or plastic bag. Baked pasta dishes such as lasagna work equally well.

Stews, chili, and soups also make great frozen meals. Store them in large plastic containers.

A rice-and-bean mixture will store well. Simply defrost and use for nachos, burritos, or other delicious Mexican meals.

Next time you grill or barbecue hamburgers or bake chicken or fish, make extra. When the meat cools down, wrap portions individually in freezer wrap or Ziplock® bags and store in the freezer. If you don't have a microwave, simply take them out of the plastic, wrap them in aluminum foil and heat them in the oven. Note: When making hamburgers, be sure to use extra lean ground beef and try mixing vegetables and rice into the patties. When preparing chicken, cut all the excess fat off. These meats can also be used in stews, chills or casseroles.

Condiments

Condiments are those extras we add to foods to enhance flavor; many healthy foods turn into fattening foods because of the condiments we add. For example, a healthy, carbohydrate-rich baked potato turns into a high-fat food when we add butter, sour cream, cheese, or bacon bits. You don't, however, have to give up flavoring your food. Food should be enjoyed. To cut down on fat and salt, though, you must make some changes. Here are ways to add flavor and texture to your food:

Creamers

Creamers are high in saturated fat and cholesterol. Try using nonfat dry milk powder instead (or mixed in at first).

Butter/Margarine

Butter contains saturated fat, known to increase cholesterol levels and contribute to heart disease. Margarine contains trans-fatty acids, which are as bad if not worse. Both butter and margarine contain about 11 grams of fat per tablespoon. However, in that serving, margarine has no cholesterol and only two grams of saturated fat compared to butter's seven grams--so if you must, margarine may be a better choice. And the softer the margarine, the fewer trans-fatty acids. Use butter or margarine sparingly on foods. As an alternative topping, try apple butter, syrup, jam, or low/nonfat sour cream or low/nonfat cream cheese instead. Keep experimenting with new flavors and decide what tastes good to you. As you learn to appreciate and prefer other toppings, you will hardly miss butter or margarine.

Ketchup and Mustard

Try replacing mayonnaise with ketchup, mustard, and low/nonfat dressings. One tablespoon of mayonnaise contains 11 grams of fat. There are low and nonfat varieties, but many other great condiments can replace mayonnaise all together. Low/nonfat dressings go well not only on salads but on sandwiches as well. Mustard is fat-free, and contains no calories. What's more, mustard adds a lot of flavor to any type of burger or sandwich. The only mustard to watch out for are those combined with mayonnaise; these have just as much fat as a low-fat mayonnaise.

Although ketchup has more sugar than other condiments, it isn't bad for you. It is also low-fat and has about the same amount of salt as mustard. Keep your eye out for brands with less sugar and salt.

Soy Sauce

Try to limit the amount of soy sauce you use, or purchase the reduced salt varieties, especially if you are concerned about sodium intake. Some brands have as much as 3,300 milligrams of sodium in 1/4 cup. The recommended daily sodium limit is 2,400 milligrams. Worcestershire sauce is a great alternative to soy sauce because it only has 150 milligrams of salt per serving.

Salsa

Unlike most condiments, salsa can actually be good for you, especially if it is a brand low in salt. Look for salsa with less than 150 milligrams per serving. Salsa is considered a healthy food because the vegetables are packed with antioxidant vitamins and minerals and phytochemicals that help fight infections and diseases. Salsa goes great not only on low-fat Mexican food, but also on baked potatoes and in soups.

Yogurt

Try using plain low/nonfat yogurt in place of sour cream. This is a hard adjustment for most at first. After a while you will get used to it and actually prefer the flavor and texture. It also works as a healthy alternative to cream cheese in many recipes. Using low/nonfat cream cheese is another way of cutting down extra fat.

Desserts

The only way you'll ever stick with a low-fat lifestyle is by enjoying yourself in the meantime. What really counts is fat consumption over the long haul, not what you decide to eat tonight. Many people assume living low-fat means giving up desserts all together. Remember, the non-diet approach to a healthy lifestyle is not denying yourself foods you really enjoy, but rather making small, healthier changes and eating in moderation. If you give up desserts entirely, chances are you'll soon binge and give up living the low-fat lifestyle--simply because it wasn't worth giving up the foods you love.

In stores today, literally every kind of dessert you can imagine comes in a low-fat or reduced calorie version: nonfat ice cream, brownies, cakes, cookies, pastries, etc. Although some products don't come close to tasting like the real thing, many are actually very satisfying and tasty. Experiment with different low/nonfat products at the store and decide which foods best satisfy your craving for sweets and satisfy your hunger.

Many people who switch to low/nonfat desserts actually consume more calories now than they did before when they were eating high-fat desserts. In order to make low/nonfat products taste good, many manufacturers replace the fat with nearly twice the amount of sugar. Therefore, many low/nonfat products may have just as many calories as the original version--be aware of these products. Furthermore, many people eat twice as many low/nonfat products than high-fat desserts--they think it's okay to eat as much of these foods as they want since they're low/nonfat. These products should be consumed in moderation--just like any other food that doesn't provide high-nutritional value.

Remember, look closely at the labels. Pay as much attention to the percent of calories from fat as you do to the actual number of fat grams. Make sure that the product has less than 25 percent of its calories coming from fat. Also, pay close attention to the serving size. If your favorite reduced-fat cookie has only 3 grams of fat per serving, and the serving size is only two cookies--by the time you have eaten six cookies, you have tripled the fat and calories.

Some companies reduce the fat by giving you a smaller serving size. For example, a low-fat Hostess® cupcake has 3.5 fewer grams of fat and 50 fewer calories than the regular version. But it weighs 13 percent less. Regular Twinkies® fat and calorie information is measured by using two cakes as a serving size, but the low-fat version uses only one cake. So it is important to check the weight and serving size, in addition to the percentage of calories from fat and the fat grams.

Some healthy, tasty dessert recommendations are fig and fruit bars, nonfat frozen yogurt, angel food cake, Jell-O®, gingersnaps, and, of course, fruits. They are among the best for several reasons: flavor, texture, and nutritional value, and they can be found in almost every grocery store. Refer to the GHF Healthy Recipes for delicious, low-fat alternative recipes for your favorite cakes, cookies, pies, and pastries. When you come across a recipe that you would like to try, simply make a list of the ingredients and take them with you shopping.

Suggestions for a Healthy Shopping List

The following is a comprehensive shopping list of healthy foods essential for low-fat, well-balanced meals. However, these foods are just recommendations. You should choose foods that are not only low in fat, cholesterol, salt, and sugar; but those that satisfy your physical and psychological hunger--those that you will enjoy. If you don't care for any of the following foods, simply replace them with other healthy foods that will be realistic in your low-fat lifestyle. Also, refer to the GHF Healthy Recipes and make a list of the ingredients you need for the recipes you would like to try. When planning a menu, ask yourself these important questions. Are the ingredients easy to use? If it is very complex and time-consuming, it is likely that your plan is unrealistic, and your low-fat meal will be unsuccessful. Is it versatile? You might not want to purchase ingredients that are only used in one recipe--they may end up spoiling in the back of the refrigerator. These are suggestions only and not intended as a complete list.

Vegetables

- carrots
- corn
- broccoli
- green beans
- onions
- cucumbers
- peas
- mushrooms
- frozen mixed vegetables
- cauliflower
- potatoes
- leafy greens (spinach, etc.)
- yams
- lettuce
- pickles
- green peppers
- cabbage
- celery
- sprouts
- water chestnuts
- garlic

Fruits

- bananas
- berries
- dates
- oranges
- melons
- peaches
- mango
- tomatoes
- kiwi
- apples
- dried fruits (pineapple, apple, mango, papaya)
- pineapple canned fruits (peaches, pineapple)
- raisins
- grapes
- grapefruit

Condiments

- mustard
- Worcestershire sauce
- teriyaki sauce (reduced-sodium)
- sweet and sour sauce
- salsa
- nonfat mayonnaise
- barbecue sauce
- low/nonfat margarine
- ketchup
- low/nonfat dressing
- tomato/pasta sauce
- relish

Fat Substitutes for Cooking and Baking

- brown sugar
- canned pumpkin
- nonfat buttermilk
- molasses
- egg whites or egg substitute
- broth
- nonfat cooking spray
- jam or jelly
- prune butter
- fruit preserves
- nonfat dry milk
- olive oil
- applesauce
- honey
- evaporated skim milk
- fruit juice
- fruit puree
- low/nonfat yogurt
- low/nonfat ricotta cheese
- prune puree
- low/nonfat cream cheese
- apple butter
- cooking spray (nonfat)
- low/nonfat sour cream

Meats

- boneless, skinless chicken breast
- boneless, skinless turkey breast
- fish (halibut, cod, shark, etc.)
- extra lean ground turkey
- extra lean ground beef
- lunch meat (low/nonfat chicken or turkey breast)
- veggie burger

Dairy Products*

- low/nonfat milk
- low/nonfat cheeses
- fat-free egg substitutes
- low/nonfat yogurt
- low/nonfat cream cheese
- egg whites

* Refer to Fat Substitutes (above) for other dairy products

Grains

- whole wheat bread
- pancake mix (whole wheat)
- millet
- pasta (made without eggs)
- cornmeal
- cereals
- whole grain flour
- low/nonfat muffins
- oatmeal
- white or brown rice
- oat bran, oat flour
- kashi
- whole grain wheat
- barley or barley flour
- tortillas
- buckwheat

Canned Foods

- fruits
- chili (turkey or vegetarian)
- baked beans (vegetarian)
- black beans
- kidney beans
- vegetables
- soups (reduced-salt)
- tomato paste
- refried beans (low/nonfat)

Herbs and Spices

- basil
- allspice
- onion powder
- ginger
- sage
- chili pepper
- paprika
- dill
- cinnamon
- thyme
- garlic powder
- curry powder
- oregano
- rosemary
- red pepper
- marjoram
- tarragon
- dry mustard
- cumin
- saffron
- nutmeg

Snacks and Desserts

- fig and fruit bars
- low/nonfat frozen yogurt
- low/nonfat cakes
- low/nonfat cookies
- popsicles
- low/nonfat granola
- Jell-O®
- gingersnaps
- graham crackers
- fruits and vegetables

Cooking and Baking

Cooking for yourself is one of the best ways to guarantee a well-balanced, low-fat meal. You are in control of what and how much you eat. Once you understand and use the healthy cooking strategies we teach, you'll be surprised how easy it is to eat low-fat. You'll discover that by making small changes to your favorite recipes, you can prepare a healthy, low-fat meal that tastes wonderful and provides you with more energy and satisfaction than ever before. Cooking with low-fat ingredients and techniques assures success with your weight management program. Here are some helpful tips on cutting out fat in common foods when cooking or baking.

Trimming the Fat on Meats

First, be sure to trim all visible fat off meats. Meats are very high in saturated fat which offers little additional value or flavor to the meal. Trimming the fat off is much easier if you put the meat in the freezer for about 20 minutes; this causes the fat to become more visible. Also, when cooking chicken or turkey, be sure to remove only visible fat, and take all the skin off. This will further reduce fat in the meal.

Pan Frying and Stir Frying

You can reduce unnecessary fat when cooking meats in several ways. First, and most importantly, never deep fry your meat; this adds extra fat and hides the meat's true flavor. If you do decide to pan fry, or stir fry in a wok, try using nonstick cooking spray (nonfat) instead of oil. Wine, nonfat milk, juice, water, herbs, and/or broth, in addition to cooking spray, work well to prevent the meat from sticking and add flavor. Using a nonfat cooking spray and other nonfat liquids adds very few calories and only a trace of fat to the meal, while using just a tablespoon of butter adds 100 calories and 11 grams of fat, or 120 calories and 14 grams of fat with a tablespoon of oil. If you must use oil, reduce the amount to half of what you would normally use and gradually reduce that amount as well. Be sure to use an unsaturated oil, such as olive oil. And use a nonstick pan so the light coating of oil will prevent food from burning. If you make sure the oil is hot before adding the ingredients, you'll decrease the amount of oil that soaks into your food.

Stir-frying in a wok or large frying pan allows you to be creative no matter what you have available: vegetables, meats, liquids, all provide unique flavors. It is also a great way to get vegetables into your

meal. Stir-frying gives vegetables a crispy, tasty flavor and leaves them packed with their original nutrients because the cooking process is so fast.

For even better flavor with no added fat, try marinating your stir-fry ingredients. Try sweet and sour sauce, teriyaki sauce, nonfat dressing, or add garlic or ginger to your favorite nonfat liquid.

Make sure all your stir-fry ingredients finish cooking at the same time. Cut all the vegetables into pieces of the same size. The meat will take the longest to cook, so stir-fry it first, gradually adding the other ingredients. Delicate ingredients such as peas, tomatoes, mushrooms, and pineapple should be added last. Try serving your stir-fry on noodles or rice for additional complex carbohydrates.

Using the Oven

Meat also cooks well in the oven. This makes it crispy and brown on the outside and tender and juicy on the inside. Try coating the meat lightly with seasoned flour, bread crumbs, or crunched crackers (can be high-fat, check label), and place it on a rack set over a pan to catch the drippings. Cooking meat without a rack allows it to soak in its own fat, adding unnecessary fat and calories to your meal.

Use lower temperatures when cooking meats. Cooking meats at high temperatures causes them to be dry and tough and to lose some of their flavor. Cooking at 325 degrees for tender cuts and 275 degrees for medium tender cuts will retain the meat's moisture, reduce shrinkage, and prevent the fat from soaking back into the meat.

Less tender cuts of meat are best cooked in some sort of liquid to create flavorful meals. Marinating the meat for an hour or so helps tenderize and add flavor. You can marinate with wine, vinegar, citrus juice, yogurt, sweet and sour sauce, ketchup, barbecue sauce, and even beer. Be sure not to use salt or marinating sauces with high amounts of salt, such as soy sauce--it will draw out the moisture.

A low-fat gravy can be added for additional flavor, color, and moisture. Put ice cubes in the meat drippings to allow them to cool quickly. As they cool, the fat will rise to the top. Simply remove the fat with a spoon and thicken meat juices with flour and corn starch.

Barbecuing and Grilling

Grilling meats on the stove top and barbecuing are other great ways of preparing a low-fat meal. Always marinate your meat in your favorite barbecue sauce, after you have removed the skin. Also, barbecued or grilled skinless chicken breast chunks can be spread over a salad, a delicious way to enjoy meat and get your vegetables as well.

Try grilling or barbecuing tuna, salmon, swordfish, shark, or halibut steaks--they grill well because they don't fall apart like many fish fillets do. Also, marinate the fish fillets with a sauce made of lemon juice,

nonfat milk, and nonfat tartar sauce.

When barbecuing or grilling a lean (select grade) steak, it is very important to marinate it for a few hours. Nonfat Italian dressing provides a great flavor and keeps the meat moist and tender. Barbecue and steak sauce also work well. Adding garlic to the marinade give the meat additional flavor.

Hamburgers and Ground Beef

Cutting out unwanted fat when making hamburgers, or ground beef in general, is also easy. First, try extra lean ground beef or turkey with less than 10 percent fat. Next, try mixing additional ingredients into the ground beef, such as chopped onion, carrots, bread crumbs, rice, nonfat cheese, oatmeal, chopped mushrooms, minced garlic, and other vegetables. This will add flavor and nutrients and will cut down on the amount of meat you are eating. Also, try baking the meat by adding fruit juice, barbecue sauce, vinegar, or sweet and sour sauce to keep the meat moist and full of flavor.

After hamburger patties are cooked, place them on a plate covered with a paper towel. Then put another paper towel on top and blot up the grease. Once you have wiped all excess grease off, place the leftovers in the refrigerator over night. Leftover fat will harden and can be easily scraped off and the meat reheated.

When cooking ground beef for casseroles, sauces, lasagna, or tacos, place the cooked meat into a colander and rinse with hot water. The water will wash away fat while leaving more important nutrients. Wrap the ground beef in a paper towel, squeeze out the excess water, and add the meat to the recipe.

Vegetables

Because of the many health benefits of vegetables, it is recommended that a healthy diet should contain at least three to five servings of vegetables a day. Of course, when vegetables are fried in oil or soaked in butter or rich sauces they are not nutritionally much better than a bowl of chips. It is important to use the right cooking techniques to minimize nutrient loss. This way your meals will not only be tasty but also rich in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. The best methods of cooking vegetables are barbecuing, microwaving, steaming, and stir-frying which was already discussed above.

Barbecuing Vegetables

Barbecuing vegetables is a great way to add extra flavor and still retain all the wonderful nutrients. Try marinating your vegetables in a barbecue sauce or a nonfat dressing rather than spreading oil or butter onto the food. You may want to use a nonfat cooking spray to prevent vegetables from sticking to the grill.

Onions, peppers, summer squash, mushrooms, eggplant, and cucumbers all work well on the barbecue.

Char, let them cool, then peel the black stuff off and add to your favorite barbecued lean meat or salads, or eat with toasted bread.

Corn on the cob also works great on the barbecue. First, shuck the ears and let them soak in water for 20 minutes then cook over low coals.

Eggplant is especially delicious on the barbecue. Wrap the whole eggplant in aluminum foil and put it on the grill for 12 to 15 minutes. Then let cool, peel away the skin, and place the eggplant on a baked potato or a sandwich.

Microwave Cooking

Microwave ovens are not only fast and convenient, they also help retain many of the nutrients lost during other cooking methods, such as boiling. In addition, you don't have to add butter or oil to keep them from sticking or burning. Microwaves work well for heating up leftovers or homemade frozen dinners.

Microwave vegetables are easy. Simply place the vegetables on a plate or in a plastic container, add a few drops of water to create steam, and put plastic wrap over the top. Microwave until they are the desired consistency--check every 30 seconds.

Steaming

Steaming, like microwaving, can cook food fast with no oil or butter added. In addition, using steam helps preserve the food's natural color, flavor, and those nutrients lost during boiling. To steam vegetables, first allow the water to boil, then add the vegetables and put the lid on. The water shouldn't come in contact with the vegetables--this will boil them and remove their nutrients.

Soups

Most commercially made soups are fattening and loaded with salt. Homemade soups can be delicious, low-fat, and loaded with nutrients. Combine lean meats, whole grains, beans, pasta, and vegetables to produce a variety of wonderfully satisfying soups, that aren't fattening. Avoid making cream-based soups such as cream of mushroom, chowder, or cream of broccoli. Soups make a good start to a full meal or the main course with whole-wheat bread and a salad. You can even take soup with you to work in a thermos for a delicious meal whenever you get hungry.

Here are helpful tips for reducing fat in your favorite soups. Often during preparation fat will rise to the surface; it can be easily removed with a slotted spoon or ladle. Store the soup in the refrigerator; the fat will then rise to the top in a waxy film that can be easily spooned off the next day. When there is no time to refrigerate the soup, simply place ice cubes in the warm (not hot) pot of soup and let the cubes remain for a few seconds. Then remove the ice cubes--the fat will have clung to them. If a recipe calls for beef, pork, or poultry, use the leanest cuts available and trim off any visible fats. For example, use white breast

meat instead of dark meat when adding chicken or turkey. If you have to brown the meat before adding it to the soup, be sure to drain off any fat before placing the meat in the soup pot.

If you use canned broth for your soups, check to see if any fat is floating on the top. Simply spoon out the small lumps of fat so that you have a nonfat broth. You can also purchase a nonfat broth.

If a recipe calls for milk, substitute either low-fat (1 percent) or nonfat (skim) milk. If the recipe calls for cream, substitute evaporated skim milk. You may also want to try adding two or three tablespoons of instant nonfat dry milk powder for a richer taste.

If the recipe calls for cheese, substitute a nonfat or low-fat version. When using nonfat cheese, use a processed cheese; these melt much better when cooking. If the recipe calls for sour cream, substitute a reduced-fat or nonfat brand for the higher-fat version, or use low/nonfat yogurt.

Baking

Every GHF Healthy Recipe is both delicious **and** low in fat. These will help you prepare well-balanced meals that leave you feeling both energized and satisfied. However, please realize that any recipe, even your favorite most fattening recipe, can be changed into a low-fat or even nonfat recipe. Once you have mastered the low-fat shopping and cooking techniques, you'll find it very easy to take any recipe out of a book and turn it into a delicious, healthy meal. The following techniques can reduce the amount of fat in your favorite recipe.

Avoid overbaking. The most common complaint people have about reduced-fat baked goods is that they are too dry. Low-fat foods bake more quickly than those made with fat. If you bake them at the same temperature or leave them in the oven as long as you would for the regular recipe, they will dry out. Bake them at least 25 degrees cooler and check their progress five minutes sooner, inserting a toothpick in the center of the food. When the toothpick comes out clean, remove the food from the oven.

Most baking recipes call for butter, margarine, or oil. Several more nutritious foods can replace these fattening ingredients. Try using reduced-fat margarine or butter. These products still have fat, about five grams per tablespoon (fat-full brands contain 11 grams). These reduced fat margarines and butters are diluted with water. Therefore, they shouldn't be substituted for the fat-full kinds on a one-to-one ratio. To compensate for the extra water, substitute $\frac{3}{4}$ as much of the fat-reduced product for the regular brands. For example, if a brownie recipe calls for one cup of butter or margarine, use $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the reduced fat version. Please note, nonfat butters and margarines do not work well in baking--the water content is too high, resulting in a very dry finished product.

Another great way of cutting out half the fat in a recipe is simply to replace the butter, margarine, or other fat sources with half as much oil. For example, if a cake calls for one cup of butter, simply leave out the butter and add a half cup of unsaturated oil. Remember to bake 25 degrees cooler and check the cake a few minutes before the usual end time.

When baking brownies, try replacing the butter, margarine, or other fat source with chocolate syrup, prune butter, or canned pumpkin. Use honey, fruit juice concentrates, or fruit jam instead of butter or margarine when making oatmeal cookies and molasses or maple syrup when baking spice cookies.

Instead of using whole eggs, try egg whites or fat-free egg substitute. Substitute three egg whites for one whole egg.

Use 1/3-1/2 the amount of oil called for in most recipes. Also, try replacing oil with apple juice, apple sauce, milk, or yogurt.

Many recipes call for nuts, and for good reason. They add both flavor and texture (crunch) to the meal or baked good. Unfortunately, nuts are loaded with fat. Try toasting the nuts before you add them to the recipe. Toasting intensifies the flavor of nuts so much that you can usually get away with cutting the amount called for in the recipe by half. Simply arrange the nuts on a cookie sheet, and bake for about 10 minutes at 325 degrees.

Many desserts are made with cream, also very fattening. One cup of cream contains almost 90 grams of fat and over 800 calories. To replace it, simply use an equal amount of evaporated milk. You can also try one cup of skim milk plus 1/3 cup of instant nonfat dry milk powder for each cup of cream.

Dining Out

Many people enjoy going out to eat. Unfortunately many people throw their 25 percent or less fat budget out the window. Even worse, many eat unbalanced meals and/or binge when eating out. Some people will even skip breakfast and lunch to compensate for the extra calories they will consume when going out for dinner. By the time dinner rolls around, they are so hungry they make unwise choices and overeat. Try to eat regular frequent meals during the day--don't starve yourself to compensate for your dinner plans. You will feel more energized throughout the day rather than weak and hungry, waiting to devour an unbalanced high-fat meal at dinner time. Also, if you know you will be really hungry before a dinner engagement, eat a healthy snack to hold you over. This will allow you to arrive at the meal pleasantly hungry so you can relax, eat slowly and enjoy the meal rather than eating anything and everything in sight. Being famished leads to quick eating, which doesn't allow you to enjoy your meal. A pleasant hunger results in enjoying the meal thoroughly.

Be sure to order what you really want when eating out. If you only order what you think you "should" rather than what you really want, you may be physically satisfied but not psychologically satisfied; you will most likely crave something more. If the meal is not enjoyable or satisfying, you may end up ordering a dessert (that you normally would not order) to fulfill your cravings. Remember, you can still eat the foods you love; just try to be creative and cut down on the fattening "extras" (butter, sour cream, etc.) that are not needed in order to enjoy the meal.

The most important point to remember when eating out the low-fat way is that you are the paying customer and you can request the way the food is prepared. Unless you say something in advance, your food will probably not contain less than 25 percent fat. Restaurants are in the business of making food taste good, which often means high-fat. But they are also in the business of giving their customers what they want. The following is a list of things to tell the waiter if you want to reduce the fat in your meal:

- Could I have that with white breast meat instead of dark meat, please?
- Could you please ask the chef to go light on the cheese (oil, butter, cream, etc.)?
- Could I have my fish poached (grilled, baked, broiled, etc.) please, and will you add vinegar or lemon juice to it?
- Could I have my baked potato with everything on the side, and could you add a side of sweet and sour sauce, low/nonfat dressing, or salsa please?
- Could I please have 1/2 the amount of meat on my sandwich?
- Could I please have my sandwich without cheese and mayonnaise and with tomatoes and mustard?
- I'd like your low/nonfat dressing on the side, please?
- Can you steam the vegetables without butter, please?
- Would you please make my omelet with "fat-free egg substitute" please, or with only one whole egg and two or three egg whites (instead of 3 whole eggs)?
- Could I have my toast served dry with jam on the side, please?
- May I get this boxed-up please?
- Could I please have a baked potato (soup or salad) instead of French fries?
- Could I have whole-grain wheat bread?
- Does this dish contain cheese, oil, butter, creamy sauce, or anything else that would increase the fat content?
- Could I substitute marinara sauce for the alfredo sauce, please?
- Could I please have my sweet and sour chicken sautéed or stir-fried rather than deep-fried, please?
- Could you box up half of my meal and serve the other half, please?

Use non-diet thinking; avoid the diet mentality. Diet thinking is irrational and unhealthy: "I better eat as much dessert as I can now because tomorrow I am going back on my diet," or "I'm full but I'll still have a piece of cake and ice cream; I will work out extra hard tomorrow to work it off." Replace these statements with the following healthier ones: "I'll take a small piece of cake because I really want it. If I don't I will feel deprived and will most likely binge later." "I really feel full. I would be eating just to eat. I am so full I probably wouldn't enjoy it anyway. Maybe I could take a piece home for another day when I would enjoy it more." Non-diet, healthy people are more selective with their choices, and they pay attention to their internal signals of hunger. They still eat what they want (being creative and limiting the extras) and they may eat a little more than usual, but their regular eating habits prevent them from unintentionally bingeing or overeating.

The following are helpful tips for eating healthy at different restaurants.

American Restaurants

American restaurants are big on meat, bread, vegetables, pasta, and potatoes. Unfortunately, what we put on them and how they are cooked turns them into high-fat foods. For example, potatoes turn into fries. Burgers and sandwiches are loaded with fattening "extras" (cheese, mayonnaise, bacon, etc.). Vegetables and breads are prepared and served in or with butter.

Meats - When eating out, most of us love to order steak and other meats. Order the smaller size. Remember, you should still limit your consumption of meat to three ounces a day--the size of a deck of cards. If you can't find a three-ounce steak on the menu, split one with a friend or have half the meat boxed up. Be sure to include other healthy foods such as steamed veggies, bread, baked potato, soup, and salad with your meal. Also, look for meals that use meat as an ingredient of a dish rather than the main focus. This is a great way to make sure you increase your vegetable and grain intake while still enjoying meat. For example, try stir-fry, chili, stew, shish kebob, or a fajita.

To cut down on fat while eating red meat, stick with sirloin steak and those cuts from tenderloin, such as filet mignon. Avoid meat with rib in the name, such as prime rib or spareribs; they contain a lot of fat. Be sure to trim off all visible fat. Also, ask that your meat be broiled or braised. Remember, chicken, turkey, and fish are great alternatives to red meat; be sure to eat the white meat and don't eat the skin.

Many people think that in order to eat out and be healthy, you have to eat soup and salad. Remember, you can eat almost any food if you think of creative ways to limit the unnecessary extras. However, soups and salad bars can make for a delicious, low-fat meal if you choose wisely.

When you are really starving, soup can seem more like an obstacle between you and the main dish than a delicious treat. The right soup can not only hold you over and provide energy, it can also be a great substitute to a fattening appetizer. Like soups, a salad can help control your appetite and can provide you with very important nutrients (vitamins, minerals, fiber). Unfortunately, they can be just as fattening as a bacon-cheeseburger with fries (well, almost) if you are not careful. Larger salad bars typically offer a wide selection of toppings for your salad, many of which are high in fat. In addition, soups can be fattening as well. By making conscious choices, you can take a trip through the soup and salad bar without going over 25 percent of total calories from fat. Here's how:

Salads - Start with plenty of lettuce and fill your plate with all your favorite vegetables. Avoid or limit the following high-fat salad selections to a modest amount:

- tortilla chips
- nuts
- marinated bean and vegetables (oil)
- banana chips
- coleslaw
- bacon bits

- potato salad
- yolk of hard-boiled eggs
- pasta salad
- croutons
- grated cheese
- olives

Eliminating all of these may be too drastic of a change at first. Limit the toppings you really love and avoid those you can live without. Learn to enjoy new and different vegetables that can add improved variety, texture, and flavor to your salad. A single tablespoon of most creamy salad dressings is usually about 100 calories, all of which are fat. Try using low or nonfat dressings if available or make your own with lemon juice, vinegar, and a little oil. Put your dressing in a separate bowl so you can dip your fork in and adjust and control the amount of dressing you use on each bite.

Soups - Choose broth-based soups (vegetable, minestrone, etc.) instead of cream-based or chowder soups. If you choose soup or salad as an appetizer, don't take big portions. Often people pile on more than they could possibly eat. In fact, many people go back for seconds even when they are full just to get their money's worth. Start out with small portions of each, remember you have the option of going back for seconds.

Breads/muffins/rolls - Most muffins at soup and salad bars are very high in fat. Unless the muffins are identified as low-fat, avoid them. Choose whole grain breads or rolls over white. They are higher in complex carbohydrates and fiber. Skip or limit butter or margarine on your bread, rolls, and muffins. If they are already cooked in butter, pass. When bread/rolls are warm, their flavor is intensified and you might not need to put anything "extra" on them.

Chinese Restaurants

Chinese restaurants generally have a wide variety of great, healthy foods. Unfortunately, many of the selections are fried in oil and therefore very high in fat. Chinese foods also tend to be high in salt and sugar as well. Many Chinese restaurants are now sensitive to the demand for healthier food and provide detailed descriptions on their menus. If there is not enough information to judge a dish by, simply ask your server what is in it and how it is prepared. If your favorite dish is high in fat or sodium, ask your server to make simple adjustments. For example, ask to have white meat stir-fried instead of deep-fried. Ask for low sodium soy-sauce. Or ask for steamed vegetables in your chow mein instead of fried noodles. Also, ask your server to limit the MSG, sugar, and oil used. Ask your server to add plenty of steamed rice and steamed vegetables to your order. Here are other ideas for lowering the fat content in Chinese dishes.

Appetizers - Avoid or limit appetizers. Most Chinese appetizers are extremely high in fat (egg rolls, wontons, fried noodles, pot stickers, etc.). Try soup or steamed dumplings instead.

Soups - Pick broth-based soups such as hot-and-sour soup. Also, ask that oil not be added.

Vegetables - Order steamed rather than fried vegetables. Ask that vegetables be stir-fried in chicken broth or water instead of oil. Ask that any sauces be prepared with half the normal amount of oil.

Seafood - Avoid or limit deep-fried entrees. Instead, order baked, stir-fried or broiled items, such as baked fillets, Mushu shrimp, braised scallops, shrimp in black bean sauce. Be assertive and ask your server to stir-fry instead of deep-frying your sweet and sour shrimp, for example.

Chicken - Avoid or limit deep-fried selections. If you really enjoy items that are normally deep-fried, request that they be stir-fried and then added to the sauce. Ask that your dish have white breast meat instead of dark meat. Many restaurants will add a \$1.00 charge, but it is well worth it. Make a request for no nuts in the dish. They add extra fat to the meal.

Rice and Noodles - Ask for plain steamed rice, not fried rice. Ask that your noodles be boiled with no oil added.

Italian Restaurants

Italian food is one of the healthiest choices you can make for a low-fat dinner. In addition, it is relatively easy to cut extra fat out without sacrificing flavor.

Appetizers - Avoid or limit the antipasto; it is soaked in oil and full of olives, cheeses, and meats high in fat. Instead of antipasto or other high-fat appetizers, order minestrone soup or a green salad with dressing on the side.

Pasta - Order your pasta with marinara, tomato, or red or white clam sauce. Avoid cream or butter sauces such as alfredo. Order ravioli or manicotti stuffed with ricotta cheese and/or spinach instead of meat. Also, remember to substitute marinara sauce for meat or cream sauce. Order vegetable lasagna, calzone, stromboli, etc. instead of the meat versions. Usually the meats used in Italian foods are high in fat (sausage, beef, etc.). Ask that any olives be omitted from your meal.

Pizza - Choose thin crust over deep dish, or ask that butter not be used with the deep dish or pan crust. Order pizza with your favorite vegetables (minus olives) instead of the high-fat meats (pepperoni, sausage, hamburger, or Canadian bacon). Most vegetarian pizzas get only 20-30 percent of their calories from fat. Adding meats to the pizza increases that to 40-50 percent fat. Ask them to reduce the amount of cheese.

Breads - Most Italian restaurants soak their garlic toast, breadsticks, etc. in butter. Ask your server to toast or serve your breads with garlic and a little parmesan cheese instead. *If you are craving butter or margarine, put it on yourself.*

Mexican Restaurants

Most Mexican restaurant food is very fattening. Fortunately, it is easy to turn a traditional high-fat Mexican meal into one that is less than 25 percent fat and still very delicious.

Appetizers - Almost every Mexican restaurant serves complimentary chips and salsa. Usually, people are so hungry when they get to the restaurant that they eat the whole basket of chips, and then dinner on top of that. Unfortunately, chips, especially restaurant tortilla chips, are very fattening. First, ask the server if they have baked chips. If baked chips aren't available, try to limit your chip consumption. When the basket of chips comes, decide right away how many you will eat. Remove that number from the basket and place them on your plate. Then ask the server to remove the basket of chips. Or better yet, ask the server to bring you warm tortillas and salsa instead of chips. Tortillas have half the fat and are delicious dipped in salsa. If you decide to order appetizers try black bean soup, tortilla soup, or seviche (a delicious marinated fish).

Rice - The rice served at most Mexican restaurants is very high in salt and fat. Ask that no oil or lard be added. Or simply ask for steamed rice and mix it with salsa or beans.

Refried Beans - Most Mexican restaurants prepare their beans with lard or serve them with melted cheese. Ask if they have refried beans without added lard, and ask them to leave off the cheese. If beans are prepared with lard, limit the portion or ask for black or pinto beans instead. They are delicious and especially good mixed with rice.

Nachos, Tacos, Burritos, Enchiladas, and Tostados - Order chicken, seafood, or rice and beans instead of beef. Ask for 1/2 the amount of sour cream, and have it on the side (or leave it off altogether). Ask for corn or flour tortillas instead of fried taco shells. Ask that they cut the amount of cheese in half. Ask for extra vegetables (no olives), rice, and sauce--all low-fat and very nutritious.

Fajitas - Fajitas are low-fat, delicious, and a great way to include vegetables in your diet. They usually include lean strips of marinated meat sautéed with onions and green and yellow peppers, wrapped in a soft tortilla with salsa on top. Ask to have the meat and vegetables stir-fried with no or very little oil. Limit the amount of sour cream and guacamole you put on the fajita, or leave it off altogether. Ask your server if there is low/nonfat sour cream available, or if you can get steamed rice or beans added to the fajita.

Mexican Foods to Avoid Altogether - Chili relleno, quesadilla, chimichanga, and the ground beef and pork in any dish.

Fast-Food Restaurants

Fast food is not popular because it is healthy and satisfying--it's popular because it is fast, cheap, and

convenient. America alone spends 50 billion dollars every year on fast food. Unfortunately, fast foods fall in the 40-50 percent fat range, many going even higher. If you decide to go out for fast food, use the following recommendations to reduce the fat in your meal.

Decide exactly what you want before you enter the restaurant, and stick with it. Don't be persuaded by the smell or pictures of juicy burgers and greasy fries. When you walk in and are indecisive, you will make poor choices and order much more food than you planned on.

Most hamburgers in fast-food restaurants are loaded with fat. If you are at McDonalds®, try the McLean® deluxe burger. It has a lot less fat. If you are not at McDonalds®, then your best bet is a small burger. Try it without cheese, mayonnaise, and special sauce. Ask for ketchup, mustard, lettuce, tomato, pickle, and onions to add additional flavor to your burger.

Try a grilled or broiled chicken or fish sandwich. These are much leaner than hamburgers. Avoid fried chicken or fish sandwiches; these have as much fat as a cheeseburger

Stay away from french fries, which have as much fat and calories as a large cheeseburger. Many people think of fries as a side dish, but they are actually like eating another whole burger. Try ordering a side salad instead. But be careful; a salad with regular dressing can be as fattening as french fries. Some of these dressing packets contain two servings with at least two hundred calories total. In addition, many of these dressings contain more than 1,200 milligrams of sodium--nearly half the recommended daily limit. Ask if reduced-fat salad dressing is available. If your favorite fast food restaurant doesn't have any low/nonfat dressing, bring your own. You can buy several different varieties of low/nonfat dressings in single serving packets to take with you wherever you go.

Here are other great alternatives to burgers and fries. Try a turkey and veggie sub at Subway®--cut down or hold the mayonnaise, cheese, olives, and oil. It is easy to find a quick vegetarian dish at Chinese restaurants--ask for a lot of steamed rice on the side. Or order a slice or two of vegetarian pizza--skip the meats, olives, and greasy deep dish variety.

Social Gatherings

Whether you are on a dinner date, at a party, or out with friends there will be tasty yet very fattening foods. Let's face it; it is fun to go out and eat with your friends. Almost every social occasion includes food--and lots of it. Sometimes it seems as if we only have two options: Resist the temptation to have fun with your friends and be "good"; or indulge and eat anything and everything in sight with your friends. There is a third choice, however. With a few simple techniques *and* without the diet mentality, you can have a social life **and** maintain a healthy life style.

Most social gathering foods focus on the look and taste rather than your health. There is almost always more than enough food, and most of it has too much fat. However, this doesn't mean you have to restrict yourself to vegetables and water while all your friends load up on delicious foods. After all, eating is one

of life's great pleasures and should be enjoyed with friends. Refer back to the "Eating Out" section for detailed strategies for eating low-fat and healthy. Here are just a few healthy tips to avoid high fat foods when at social gatherings.

- Don't skip meals to make up for the feast you will devour at a social gathering. Eat several well-balanced meals throughout the day to keep your energy level high and to remain satisfied. Try eating a small snack before going out so you arrive at the meal or gathering only pleasantly hungry, not starved. That way, you can make wise choices and enjoy the food you decide to eat.
- Be sure to pay attention to your internal signals of physiological and psychological hunger. Also, adhere to your cravings and don't avoid your favorite foods just because you think you should. If you really want something and deprive yourself, you will most likely eat uncontrollably later.
- Think of as many ways as possible to cut out the fattening extras--as long as you'll enjoy the food: how the food is cooked to picking off half the cheese.
- Avoid diet thinking: binge now, diet tomorrow, eating way past being full, saying no to something you really want, etc.
- Begin with soup, salad, bread, etc., to control your appetite and to get important nutrients you might not get later. Just remember to be careful of what and how much you put on that salad or bread; for example, choose low/nonfat dressing on the side so you are in control of how much you eat.
- Experiment with new foods (fruits and vegetables), new methods of preparation (i.e., baked instead of fried), and leaving extras off your meal. You might discover that your favorite sandwich tastes just as good without mayonnaise.

Almost every social occasion includes not only food but also alcohol and the sort of snacks that go well with it. If you like to drink, it is going to be even more difficult to trim down your weight and live a low-fat lifestyle. The reason is two-fold: First, like fat, alcohol has a high calorie content. Second, people usually eat more when they have had a few drinks, and they make unwise food choices. This explains why people get beer bellies and have trouble losing or maintaining their weight.

Alcohol and Weight Management

When you are trying to cut back on fat, it is important to factor in any alcohol you drink. Alcohol has 7 calories per gram, almost as much as fat (9 calories per gram), and almost twice as many calories as a gram of carbohydrate or protein. In addition, when you consume alcohol at the same time as food, your body tends to burn the alcohol first, sparing the fat. Suppose, for example, you cut your calories from fat down to the recommended level of 25 percent. If you continue to consume, 10 percent of your daily calories (approximately two drinks) from alcohol, it is as though your diet has 40 percent fat, proportionate to calories.

As you can see, if your dietary approach is to change to a low-fat diet, it will not be nearly as effective if you drink too much alcohol. This is not to say you have to cut out alcohol altogether. Alcohol, just like fat, cholesterol, salt, and sugar, should be consumed in moderation. Try cutting back to one glass, or a

glass every other night, or just on the weekends. Also, try a light beer with fewer calories.

Studies show that alcohol makes people hungrier; at the same time, it lowers their inhibitions, so they are more likely to binge. The more you drink, the less you care about what you are eating. If you are drinking on an empty stomach you are really setting yourself up for trouble. You may want to only drink non-alcoholic beverages until you have eaten--otherwise you are likely to eat everything and anything that looks--or tastes--good. If you want to drink that beer or wine with the meal, you are not drinking on an empty stomach, so you'll control your appetite better. You can always ask the bartender to reduce the alcohol in your favorite drink.

When you drink alcohol, your body naturally loses salt, which is why you readily reach for salty foods such as chips and nuts when you are drinking. The problem is, most people eat a couple of handfuls of these snacks, which contains anywhere from 20-70 grams of fat before you have even put a dent in your hunger. Do yourself a favor and ask the bartender or host if there are any pretzels and/or air-popped popcorn; both have a lot less fat.

Eat Regularly and Less as the Day Goes on

Now that you have a clear understanding of what you should eat and how you should prepare it, it is very important that you understand when and how often to eat. Most of us have been raised to eat three meals a day, progressively increasing the amount of food as the day goes on. The typical American has a small breakfast (if at all), a medium-sized lunch, and a large dinner, which usually includes dessert. Many of us still have the idea that snacking is bad--we were taught it would ruin our appetite. Unfortunately, these eating patterns make it very difficult to manage our weight.

The frequency of how often we eat per day has been shown to greatly affect how fat we are. Many studies have concluded that those who eat four to six smaller meals per day have less body fat than those eating two or three meals a day, despite the fact that both groups eat about the same amount of calories. In addition, eating patterns of three or more meals a day may also have a positive effect on blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels, which are usually lower than levels from one or two meals a day. A calorie is not the same calorie at different times of the day; calories consumed at dinner and later are more likely to be stored than those consumed in the morning or mid-day, simply because we are less active at night.

Eating only three times a day requires us to go too long without eating. By the time lunch or dinner rolls around, we are so famished we eat anything easily available. Eating small, healthy snacks in between meals not only prevents you from gorging; it increases your metabolism and helps you feel energized and satisfied throughout the day.

It is also important not to eat too much at each of these snacks and meals but rather just enough to feel satisfied and energized. However, if you do eat too much (beyond being pleasantly full), don't feel guilty; focus on the present moment rather than the past. And certainly don't eat again just because it is dinner

time--eat only when you feel the need to eat. If you are not as hungry at dinner time, eat a smaller portion than you are used to--eat according to your level of hunger--not just because "it is time" or "that is how much I usually eat at dinner." Likewise, it is important not to eat snacks if you are not physically hungry. Always pay attention to your internal signals of hunger. It is crucial that you experience comfortable hunger. If you are constantly eating just to eat, you will never experience true hunger and not learn to respond to your internal hunger signals. If you have been dieting, you are probably out of touch with what true hunger is.

Food high in fat can mask physiological hunger signals because the emptying of the stomach is delayed due to the high fat content. Making small changes and decreasing the amount of fat you eat in foods will help you attend to physiological hunger. In time, your food choices will reflect new preferences that are lower in fat, allowing you to acknowledge more accurate hunger signals.

Eating a large meal increases the opportunity for fat cells to extract fat from the blood and, therefore, grow bigger. Fat cells can actually adapt to a pattern of large, infrequent meals by becoming more efficient at storing fat.

In addition, a two-to-three-meal a day pattern causes the body to face long stretches without food. This eating pattern actually tricks the body into thinking it's in a starvation state, initiating physiological changes that actually slow down your body's resting metabolic rate, the number of calories "burned" at rest. This occurs because your body is trying to conserve energy for fear of starvation. A reduction in metabolic rate slows fat loss. This is another reason why diets **do not** work. Our body responds to the reduction in calories as if it were starving and your metabolism slows down. Once again, if you are trying to lose fat by decreasing your caloric intake, it is best to eat small meals and snacks four to six times a day so your metabolic rate will stay "revved" up throughout the day, making fat loss and/or maintenance a much easier and healthier task. Of course, be sure that the meals are nutritious, well-balanced, and low in fats and simple sugars. If you eat four to six meals a day and don't implement the healthy eating habits explained in this program, you are missing the big picture.

In addition to eating smaller meals more frequently, try to plan so that you don't eat your largest meal of the day late at night. The body's metabolic rate has a natural cycle of highs and lows, peaking late in the day and dropping to its lowest level during sleep. It makes sense to avoid putting a large meal into your system after 8:00 at night when your metabolic rate is beginning to slow down. If you do feel hungry after this time, you don't need to go to bed hungry, just try to eat something especially healthy and in small portions. If it is not possible to avoid a later dinner, eat a snack around 6:00 p.m. so you won't be so hungry later.

Meal Ideas

Breakfast

Perhaps the most important meal of the day is breakfast. Remember, food eaten earlier in the day has a

greater chance of being used for energy rather than being stored as fat. In fact, several studies have shown that eating breakfast is one of the many lifestyle habits linked to longevity. Other studies have shown people who eat most of their calories in the morning lose more fat than those who eat the calories at night. Other studies have shown that those who eat breakfast burn 5 percent more calories throughout each day than those who skip breakfast. In fact, what you eat in the morning dictates how much energy you will have the rest of the day.

Most nutrition experts agree that breakfast is one of the most important times to eat. Not only do we burn food more efficiently, but after several hours of sleep, our body is starving for well-balanced nutrients. It has been without food for many hours, and the brain and body need some nutrients soon to function effectively.

Traditional breakfast foods such as bacon, sausage, eggs, donuts, and hash browns are very high in fat, and they won't provide you with adequate energy. In fact, they will most likely make you drowsy again. High-fat foods take longer to digest, causing the stomach to draw more blood away from the brain. Other breakfast foods high in fat include granola, buttered toast, French toast, Poptarts®, and muffins. Below is a healthy substitution for each of the above artery cloggers:

Traditional High-fat Breakfast	Low-fat Healthy Version
sausage	garden (veggie) sausage
eggs	3 egg whites and one whole egg (add low-fat cheese and your favorite veggies)
bacon	low-fat turkey bacon
donuts	low/nonfat pastry products
hash browns	hash browns made without butter or just a little oil. Try cooking spray and add onions, peppers, etc. (or, try cooking the potatoes cooked with egg whites)
buttered toast	toast with light jam or apple butter
pancakes	pancakes with syrup (no butter)
French toast	French toast made with 3 egg whites to 1 whole egg
Poptarts®	reduced-fat Poptarts®
muffins	low/nonfat muffins
granola or high-sugar cereals	low-fat granola or other low-fat cereals high in fiber

As you can see, eating a low-fat breakfast will take a conscious effort, but you will really feel and appreciate the difference. The best breakfast foods are those your body can convert quickly to energy--

complex carbohydrates, fiber, and protein. Other great breakfast foods include dry cereal with nonfat milk, bagel (with jelly and/or nonfat cream cheese), oatmeal, yogurt, and any of your favorite fresh fruits. Refer to the GHF Healthy Recipes for low-fat breakfast recipes.

Remember, there is no reason to wait for lunch if you are hungry and need a "pick-me-up," have a cup of yogurt and some fruit, or other small snacks to hold you until lunch and to keep energy levels high. Mid-morning snacks will keep your stomach satisfied and your brain sharp for whatever you are doing before lunch rolls around.

Lunch

From noon to early evening--that long stretch is when we are most likely to feel worn out, tired, bored, and hungry. The mid-afternoon slump often has to do with the meal we ate at lunch. Many people eat either fast food or food that wasn't well planned, thus high in fat and low in complex carbohydrates, fiber, and protein. It is very important that your mid-day meal be rich in complex carbohydrates and include protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Foods high in fat cause us to feel drowsy and sluggish.

Even if you are eating five or more meals a day, lunch should be the biggest. If you are like most people, you do most of your work in the afternoon. Hence, there is a great need for a well-balanced healthy meal. Remember, however, that none of your meals should be so big that you feel uncomfortably full afterward. Always pay attention to your internal signals of satiety and fullness.

Try to plan your lunch ahead of time. Prepare a well-balanced meal the night before so you can make smart decisions on foods that will satisfy your physical and psychological hunger and provide you with energy. Try to include a wide variety of foods that will go together and provide you with the proper nutrients for good health.

Many of our clients have had great success by taking an hour or two on the weekend and preparing a large batch of their favorite meals. For example, you could spend a Sunday afternoon making vegetable chili and low-fat cornbread, bean and rice burritos, or cutting up all your favorite vegetables that go well on a turkey and low/nonfat cheese sandwich. With the help of plastic bags, plastic containers, lunch boxes, thermos, etc., you can pack a well-balanced, delicious meal to eat and enjoy anywhere at anytime.

A good example of a delicious lunch that provides enough energy for you to be productive throughout the rest of the day is half a turkey or chicken breast sandwich with vegetables (tomatoes, pickles, sprouts, onions, green peppers, mushrooms) on whole-grain bread with mustard and a little nonfat ranch dressing. Include a baked potato or vegetable or minestrone soup, or baked beans, or rice. If you are still hungry and have a sweet tooth, try a couple of fig bars or low-fat cookies. This meal provides good sources of protein (which should be 10-20 percent of the total calories): turkey or chicken, beans, potato; good sources of fiber (you should have 25-35 grams/day): whole grain bread, fresh vegetables, beans; good sources of complex carbohydrates (which should be about 60 percent of total calories): whole-grain bread, fresh vegetables, soup, potato, beans, or rice; good sources of vitamins and minerals: fresh

vegetables (refer to RDA and optimal level given in the GHF Nutrition component); and it's low in fat (should be less than 25 percent total calories): small amounts in chicken and turkey, toppings for baked potato (unless nonfat sour cream, etc.), small amounts in baked beans and bread. Try to pack your favorite fruits for a late afternoon snack. Refer to the GHF Recipes for other healthy, low-fat lunch ideas.

Snacking

If you are used to eating only two or three times a day, making the switch to a more frequent, small meal pattern may take some getting used to. It is very important to plan your day in advance. Pack food so you are certain to have nutritious snacks available in the mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Advance planning is the most effective way to avoid skipping meals and becoming too hungry. When you carry your own snacks, you can make more conscious decisions about your food choices. If you keep a stash of healthy snacks in your briefcase or your desk drawer, you are more likely to resist the temptation of unwise food choices that are often easily available such as donuts in the office, or candy bars in vending machines.

Snacking has a number of advantages. By eating smaller meals more often, you can keep your energy levels high throughout the day. And because you are never letting your "fuel tank" run completely empty, you will be much less tempted by whatever junk-food opportunities cross your path.

Another great benefit is that eating more often helps your metabolism run more efficiently, meaning that even though you may be eating a little more than before, you will actually burn fat more easily. Remember, however, that these great benefits won't occur if you are eating high-calorie foods. You must implement the low-fat eating techniques we have discussed previously into these snacking strategies as well.

Now that you understand the importance of snacking on small healthy meals throughout the day, it is essential to know exactly what types of foods make good snacks. The answer is simple, and redundant: a wide variety of foods that contain less than 25 percent of calories from fat. In addition, they should be low in sugar and salt and high in fiber. With the small-meal pattern, you don't necessarily want to consume more calories; rather you want to reduce the amount of food you eat at any one time so you can spread the same number of calories evenly throughout the day. The following is a list of healthy snacks that almost everyone will enjoy. Whether you need a sweet, sour, or salty taste, one of these snacks will likely satisfy your craving--without increasing body fat.

There is nothing wrong with enjoying an occasional sugar-packed snack. The problem for most of us is that one serving leads to two, which then becomes three or four. Foods high in sugar should be eaten in moderation. Too much sugar gives us an energy high that doesn't last very long, then we "crash." These high sugar foods also contain a large number of "empty calories"--calories with no nutritional value.

If you have a balanced low-fat diet, it is okay to indulge in something sweet once in a while. But when sugar is combined with fat, such as chocolate or buttery rich desserts, it becomes a problem. To satisfy your sweet craving, try hard candies which last a long time, or chewy candies such as Gummy Bears®,

licorice, or jelly beans.

When you do have a craving for something rich--a brownie or piece of cheese cake, for example--check out the low or reduced fat varieties in the grocery store. You can now find almost anything in a low/nonfat version (cakes, chips, cookies) that still taste pretty good and satisfy that craving for a rich, delicious dessert. Fattening snacks provide more than just sweet delicious taste; there are also certain textures that are very appealing: primarily chewiness and creaminess. To combine both sweetness and rich texture, try fig bars or graham crackers. They are low in fat and very satisfying.

Remember to eat even these low-fat versions in small quantities. Many people think that because a food is low-fat, they can eat as much as they want. But fat or no fat, you are still consuming calories. Keep in mind also that the whole idea of snacking is not to become too full, but rather to satisfy cravings, maintain energy levels, and prevent "starvation."

Many great-tasting cereals will satisfy your hunger and sweet tooth. A high fiber wheat flake cereal has a very small amount of fat; add fresh fruit, skim milk, and maybe a little sugar or honey, and you will satisfy your craving for a delicious, sweet, crunchy snack and also get some very valuable nutrition as well.

Many popcorn products are loaded with salt and fat, especially saturated fat. Try your best to avoid movie popcorn, and read nutritional labels for the amount of fat in each serving. Try air-popped popcorn or a "light" packaged product with less than 25 percent of calories from fat. With a little creativity, popcorn can be a delicious, healthy snack. Instead of butter or margarine try adding nonfat butter to your popcorn. Or try parmesan cheese, pepper or chili powder, or cinnamon and/or a handful of raisins or dates. These new methods are different but are actually very tasty and satisfying.

Instead of snacking on traditional chips or cheese crackers loaded with fat, try the baked low-fat version. These have less fat and calories and leave you feeling a lot more energized and less greasy. The following chips and crackers are lower in fat, calories, and salt: Ry-Krisps®, Mr. Pips Baked Chips®, Tostitos Baked Chips®, Healthy Choice Crackers®, and cracked wheat crackers. Also try Chex Mix® for a crunchy, tasty treat. These snacks have plenty of flavor and crunch that will satisfy your chip/cracker craving. Also, try flavored rice cakes or saltine crackers with nonfat cheese melted on top or nonfat cream cheese spread on them. Pretzels are another great, low-fat snack.

Low/nonfat yogurt is a delicious, healthy snack. Eating yogurt plain or with added healthy goodies provides a good source of calcium and protein. There are many healthy foods you can add to give yogurt extra flavor or texture: cereal, bananas, berries, dates, etc. Jell-O® can also be mixed with yogurt for a delicious treat. Many puddings made with low-fat or nonfat milk also make for a delicious low-fat snack. Low-fat or nonfat cottage cheese mixed with berries or other fruit is also a healthy, satisfying snack rich in calcium and protein.

Snacking on fruits and vegetables not only provides you with a tasty treat; they help meet your daily

vitamin, mineral, and fiber requirements. Also, fruits and vegetables are very convenient. Most come in their own handy wrapper: bananas, apples, oranges, pears, melons, etc. Most vegetables can be cut up to bite-sized pieces and stored in a plastic bag or plastic container. Instead of drinking coffee or soda, have an 8-ounce glass of 100 percent fruit juice, or try vegetable or V-8® juice. Low/nonfat fruit bars and dried fruits such as apples, pineapples and mangos also make great snacks. You can't go wrong with fruits and vegetables (except avocados and olives). The key is to keep them easily accessible throughout the day wherever you are.

Dinner

Most people come home from a long hard day and enjoy a huge dinner. Although dinner is a great time to enjoy a meal away from the office at home with the family, it is not the best time to "pig out"! This is actually the meal you should focus the most attention on what and how much you eat.

Many people consume 70-80 percent of their daily food intake at night. As a rule, dinner shouldn't account for any more than 40-50 percent of your daily calories. Many studies have shown that foods eaten in the evening are more likely to be stored as fat. This occurs simply because most people aren't as active in the evening, and thus their food is not used as efficiently as it would be at other times of the day. So, whether you are eating a three-course meal or just a light snack, do it early in the evening.

The following are different methods to prevent losing control in the evening.

Eat between 3 to 6 meals a day. If you haven't eaten anything since lunch, you will probably be so hungry that you will make unhealthy choices and eat beyond fullness. Always pay attention to your physical and psychological signals of hunger. If you are hungry at 3:00 in the afternoon, eat a snack; it will also provide you with extra energy. By sitting down to dinner pleasantly hungry rather than famished, you will make wiser food choices and stop eating when you are pleasantly full.

Pay attention to the quality of the foods you eat at dinner and/or later in the evening. Remember, approximately 10-20 percent of your total calories should come from protein, less than 25 percent from fat (less than 10 percent of that saturated fat), and about 60 percent from carbohydrates (complex/50 percent; simple/10 percent). Every meal should have dietary fiber (for a total of 25-35 grams a day). Since the foods you eat in the evening are less likely to be used as energy and more likely to be stored as fat, eat a well-balanced meal low in fat. Refer to the shopping, cooking, and dining out strategies to keep the foods you eat delicious, satisfying, and low in fat.

Pay attention to signals of fullness to avoid overeating. If you master our low-fat, healthy shopping, cooking, and dining-out strategies, you will discover that this new style of eating is more refreshing and energizing and also very, very delicious. Thus, it may be hard for you to stop eating when you are comfortably full. Remember, that it takes up to 20 minutes for your brain to realize you are full. Having a few small courses rather than one huge portion provides the time needed to realize that you are getting full. For example, eating a bowl of soup or having a salad before the main course has been shown to

reduce the amount of food people eat during the main course. By the time you reach the main course, you are less likely to stuff yourself when your brain has already realized that you are filling up. Also, don't feel you must eat everything on your plate. When you start to feel comfortably full, stop and save the rest for another meal. Instead of wolfing everything down, take time to savor your meal--you will notice signals of fullness much easier. In addition, wait 10 minutes before going back for seconds; this gives your brain time to catch up with your stomach. Then decide if you really want more. Please refer to the GHF Healthy Recipes for great, low-fat dinner ideas.

Desserts

You have just eaten dinner, are you really still hungry an hour or two later, or are you just bored? Be sure to pay attention to your internal signals of hunger. Perhaps you are not so much hungry as simply craving something sweet to munch on. Remember, late in the evening, foods are stored as fat more easily than at any other time of the day. So if you decide to enjoy a dessert, don't binge; eat slowly to savor and enjoy the flavor and texture.

If you decide you are still hungry, try the low-fat or nonfat versions of your favorite desserts; however, be sure to eat these in moderation. Many people think that since a food is nonfat, they can eat as much as they want, even past the point of fullness. Even though a food has little or no fat, it still has calories--sometimes just as many as the regular version. Many manufacturers double the amount of sugar to replace the fat, to make a product taste better. If you eat 1 1/2 to 2 times what you normally would of the regular dessert, chances are you will still consume the same number of calories, perhaps more.

Whatever you decide to eat, make sure you enjoy it. Really taste and savor it. Pay attention to the flavor and texture. Start out with a small portion; if you are still craving more, wait 15 minutes and decide if you are still hungry and have the same craving or if you want it simply because it is there. Remember, it takes a while for your brain to notice that you actually have eaten the food. Chances are after 15 minutes, the sweetness will have registered and your craving will be gone.

Baking your own desserts is probably the best way to enjoy a low-fat treat that is still delicious. This way, you have total control over how much fat you reduce and sugar you add so that the food satisfies your specific cravings. When you are just beginning a low-fat, healthy life-style, it is unrealistic to bake totally nonfat desserts. First, try slightly reducing the amount of fat (reducing oil, butter, eggs, etc.) in your favorite dessert recipe. As you become accustomed to the new tastes and textures, gradually reduce the fat until the dessert is both low in fat and tastes so good you prefer it over the original recipe. Refer to the baking section for ideas on how to reduce fat in recipes without sacrificing flavor. Also, refer to the GHF Healthy Recipes for low-fat, healthy suggestions that are delicious and satisfying.

Water

It is not uncommon for thirst to masquerade as hunger. When the body is dehydrated, it often sends hunger signals. Therefore, it is crucial to stay well hydrated throughout the day. As a rule, drink at least

eight glasses of water a day. When you plan to attend a big dinner engagement, drink a few extra glasses to keep your appetite under control. If you think you are hungry, drink a glass or two of water first; then decide if you really are hungry and not just thirsty.

Do not fill up on water with the intent of decreasing your appetite and/or hunger pangs. Filling up on water for this purpose is another example of the diet mentality. Filling up on water instead of eating a well-balanced meal will make you feel bloated and temporarily full. However, by the next meal, you may be so famished that you eat anything in sight. Filling up on water to feel artificially full is not dealing with your physical hunger, but rather avoiding it. It will only reappear even greater later on.

If you wait to drink water until you are thirsty, you are already partially dehydrated. Try to drink water throughout the day to maintain a steady state of hydration. If your body isn't getting enough fluids, it may send signals to you to eat more to obtain these fluids. However, filling up on juice, ice cream, soda pop, popsicles, Gatorade® or other sports drinks to cool off and replace fluids does not address the real problem. Most of these foods do not effectively replenish the fluids in your body because of their high sugar content; you will most likely still be thirsty and feel unsatisfied.

Many of the fluids people drink are in fact dehydrating. Alcohol, coffee, and tea are just some of the fluids that don't return water to our system after it is lost; they simply do not work to re-hydrate us.

Below are the signs of dehydration. Be sure to watch for these symptoms, as you can prevent dehydration if you attend to them by drinking more water.

Signs of Dehydration	
Symptom	Cause/Explanation
Headache	Blood, which is mostly water, carries oxygen. The brain is short of oxygen, causing headaches.
Fluid retention (swollen ankles, etc.)	Body is trying to preserve all available amounts of water.
Dizziness, confusion	Heart pumps less blood to brain.
Elevated heart rate/weak fluttering pulse	Heart is racing to pump a diminishing supply of blood to muscles.
Urinating only small amounts	Body is trying to preserve all available water.
Dark urine color	Little water to waste ratio.

Acquiring a Taste for Water

Most people don't drink simply to quench their thirst; they respond to a psychological need: they simply

want to enjoy the taste of their favorite beverage. Changing from coffee or soda pop to water is a drastic change for most people--just like going from a cheeseburger to a Gardenburger® may be too drastic of a change all at once. People may shift to drinking water because they feel they should, rather than because they enjoy the refreshing taste of water.

Making the switch gradually rather than drastically to drinking water assures that you will soon develop a taste preference for water. Rigidly switching from soda to water is diet thinking and is unlikely to become a permanent change. Adding water to your favorite beverages will help you gradually learn to enjoy and prefer water. It also makes beverages more appealing to the eye and palate and will allow you to eventually appreciate the natural and refreshing taste of water.

Gradually adding water to beverages will help you to learn to acquire a taste for drinks that are lower in sugar and thus less sweet. If you learn to acquire a preference for foods lower in sugar, you may choose to pass up some sweet foods or have only a few bites since the food will taste too sweet. The end result is likely to be less food eaten because you choose to eat less--not because you feel you should stop eating sweets, but because sweets no longer appeal to you.

Water and Exercise

An effective exercise program is an absolute necessity for a successful weight management program. For optimal results and performance, fluids must be replaced by water before, during, and after exercise. Water is by far the most important nutrient for an athlete or exercising individual. Unfortunately, most people rely on thirst for replacing fluids, even though this is not an accurate indicator of how much fluid the body has lost. Water losses should be monitored by one of the following two methods:

- a) Check the color of your urine. A dark color means you are dehydrated. A pale yellow or no color means you are hydrated.
- b) Weigh yourself before and after exercise. For each pound of body weight lost, drink two cups of water.

Guidelines for Fluid Replacement and Hydration

- Consume 3-6 ounces of water every 10-15 minutes during a workout.
- Consume cold fluids since they empty from the stomach the most quickly.
- If the exercise session or competition is less than 90 minutes, water is your best choice for fluid replacement.
- If the exercise or activity lasts longer than 90 minutes of continuous work, then sports drinks may be beneficial since the body needs a source of carbohydrates.
- If the sugar concentration of your sports drink is higher than 6 percent, dilute it. Sports drinks that supply more than 9 percent carbohydrates lengthen the time it takes water to empty from the

stomach, thereby promoting dehydration.

Exercise

So far, we have concentrated entirely on healthy, low-fat shopping and cooking strategies and the non-diet mind-set you must have to be successful at your weight management program. Solely focusing on healthy eating, however, will blind you from another pathway of optimal health, one that may be even more effective: exercise. Someone with the healthiest low-fat eating habits will still have a hard time achieving the desired results without a safe and effective exercise program. We use the word "exercise" here as an umbrella term for three different forms of exercise: cardiovascular (aerobic) exercise, strength training (weightlifting), and flexibility training (stretching). Although stretching is a very important component of optimal health, it doesn't play as big a role in a successful weight management program as the other two forms of exercise. The success of your weight management program, and your health in general, depends not only on healthy eating habits, but also on a safe and effective cardiovascular exercise and strength training program. Implementing only one of these two important forms of exercise will not allow you to reach your full potential--a combination of both, however, assures optimal health and the results your body deserves. By making both cardiovascular exercise and strength training a part of your exercise routine, you can train your body to become an efficient "fat burner" rather than a "fat storer." Any program can help you lose weight, even the most ineffective quack diet. Those who combine exercise with a low-fat diet will reduce their body fat and keep it off for life.

Cardiovascular Exercise

Cardiovascular exercise requires large muscle movement for a sustained period of time, elevating your heart rate to at least 50 percent of its maximum level. Examples of effective cardiovascular exercise include walking, jogging, biking, swimming, using a stair-stepping machine, aerobics classes, cross-country skiing, rowing, and many other repetitious activities performed over an extended period of time. When performed on a consistent basis, any of these exercises will effectively promote fat utilization. We recommend 20-60 minute sessions at least three to five times a week.

Cardiovascular exercise strengthens your heart and lungs, improving your cardio-respiratory system and decreasing total cholesterol levels. It also stimulates fat metabolism. This is why cardiovascular exercise is so important to an effective weight management program--without it, you will find it very difficult to reduce and then maintain optimal body-fat levels. Cardiovascular exercise is the most effective way to "burn" body fat, not only while exercising, but also for some time afterward while the metabolism remains elevated.

Please refer to the GHF Cardiovascular Exercise component to learn the many other great benefits of a sound cardiovascular program. There you'll find the very important exercise guidelines and safety precautions you should understand and follow for maximum effectiveness. You'll also find discussion of different training methods you can work into your cardiovascular program to prevent boredom, and to overcome any plateaus you reach that might stop you from achieving optimal results.

Strength Training

Many people starting a weight management program do a great job of gradually decreasing the amount of fat in their diet while increasing their physical activity--unfortunately, these people are leaving out the third component of a safe, effective weight management program--strength training. While cardiovascular exercise is good for burning calories and revving up the metabolism, it doesn't promote much muscle and strength gain. Some would object with "I want to get smaller, not bigger." Don't worry; if you follow the GHF program, you won't get big and bulky (unless you want to). But do understand this: If you do want to lose body fat and improve your health, you need to increase your strength and lean muscle mass. The more muscle you have, the more calories your body burns, even at rest. This is because it takes a lot more energy (calories burned) to sustain lean muscle than it does fat.

One of the primary reasons traditional diets fail is simply because people lose muscle, due to restrictive eating and not implementing a strength training program. Even though they are losing fat, they are also losing muscle, with a subsequent decrease in metabolic efficiency. Thus, when they eventually gain back the fat (because they didn't make a realistic life-style change), they are in worse shape than when they started, because now their metabolism works less efficiently. This is primarily why people gain fat as they get older--they are losing muscle due to a common reduction in physical activity. Therefore, if you want to lose body fat, it makes sense to do everything you can do to preserve the muscle you have, muscle that is helpful in conditioning your metabolism.

Including strength training exercises into your weight management program is the most effective method for preserving, as well as increasing, muscle, and for promoting improvements in strength and muscle tone. This increases your performance during your favorite activities and it firms your body. At the same time, it encourages your muscles to burn fat, even while you sleep! There are many other benefits of strength training. Stronger muscles tend to be less prone to injury; in addition, the creation of muscle assists in the mineralization of your bones, helping to create strong, healthy ones.

Unfortunately, many people start strength training programs that are unsafe and ineffective. They don't know how to develop a sound strength training program, specific to their goals and interests. Not knowing the correct number of sets and repetitions and the weight to use, or the amount of rest to take between training sessions, for example, can lead to frustration, discontinuation of the program, or even worse--injury. Refer to the GHF Strength Training component for the very important principles and guidelines of a safe and effective program. Here you will also find advanced training techniques and methods for overcoming frustrating plateaus. Understanding and implementing these principles and techniques will assure that you avoid boredom, injury, and plateaus and achieve the results you deserve.

The Diet Mentality and Exercise

The diet mentality not only adversely effects eating habits, it also has a negative influence on the ability to implement a successful exercise program. Exercising simply to burn calories and lose weight, rather

than for fun or to gain the many other benefits exercise provides, can be as much of a failure as any fad diet. When you use exercise solely to lose weight, you are likely to quit when you have met your weight loss goal; if you don't lose weight, you are likely to quite out of frustration. Either way, you miss out on gaining the many other wonderful things exercise can do, including increased self-esteem, an increase in physical and mental performance, a decreased risk of disease, and a greater appreciation of your body.

Diets encourage you to do two things that are not helpful to the process of your exercise program. First, they encourage you to lose weight without any consideration as to the nature of the weight lost. More than likely, on a traditional diet, the weight lost is not just fat (muscle, etc.). Second, diets monitor the progress you have made by using the scales--this gives you no information about the body composition changes actually occurring. Refer to the section that discusses effective ways to measure the progress of your exercise and weight management program.

Many people use the thinking and behavior patterns they've learned from their diets and repeat them with their exercise programs. If they miss a work-out, they label themselves bad--they feel guilty and figure they might as well eat whatever they want, "the day is ruined anyway;" even worse, they quit all together. They assume more exercise or higher intensities are better, so they set themselves up with impossible expectations. They choose exercises they don't like because they believe that is what they should do--"No pain, No gain." Painful exercises that we dread doing discourage us from continuing a healthy program and do not lead to a permanent lifestyle change. The more-is-better, pain-for-gain thinking destroys the fun and enjoyment of exercise and does not fit well into a new, healthy lifestyle.

A successful exercise program requires that it be fun, something you look forward to and feel good about afterwards. You must do exercises that you enjoy and you are comfortable with. When you become bored, make slight changes in your routine, keep it exciting. Try to incorporate exercise into things you enjoy. For example, if you love to read, take your favorite book to the gym and read it on the exercise bike or between your strength training sets. Or if you enjoy music, take your Walkman® and favorite tape with you when you go jogging. If you can't make it to the gym because your favorite TV shows are on tonight, do your exercises in front of the TV. If you enjoy spending time with your friends, ask them to join you in your fitness program. Getting together with friends for a few games of basketball or racquetball makes exercising fun and less of a burden. The best exercises for long-term weight control aren't the ones that make you wish they were over--they're the ones you will actually do, be it aerobics classes, walking, strength training, or cross-country skiing. Experiment and find out what works best for you.

Maximize every possible opportunity for being active. Exercise doesn't have to be limited to the track or in the gym. You can also greatly increase the amount of physical activity your body gets by making small lifestyle changes. Get in the habit of taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Keep your running/walking shoes in the car so you are always prepared. Take a brisk walk after lunch before returning to work. Take a walk if you're early to an appointment. Park your car some distance away from the restaurant, movie theater, or workplace; or get off the bus a few stops early so you can enjoy a short walk before the day's activities begin. Choose a hike or a bike ride instead of a movie. Play with your kids in the backyard rather than dropping them off at the video arcade. Active living means enjoying physical activity and

learning how to integrate it into your daily life. These activities do not take a lot of extra time, and they are well worth the extra effort. Besides burning additional calories and "jump starting" the metabolism, these changes keep us focused and productive, moving in the right direction to a healthier lifestyle.

Benefits of an active lifestyle are two-fold: immediately, in the pleasure of doing the activity; and over time, through improved health, well-being, and quality of life. Be sure to be active in a way that feels comfortable and enjoyable to you. Being bored makes us feel lazy and unmotivated and tricks us into thinking we are tired. You must fight this by finding an activity that you look forward to doing, something you enjoy and can stick with.

Take Action

You should now have a whole new perspective on your body weight. You should be measuring your progress and defining your success in terms of lifestyle changes and health status rather than the simple, obvious result of weight loss. With a positive perspective on life, you will learn to be more flexible, to accept and deal with life's highs and lows, and to learn from your mistakes. With the new attitude and habits you are learning and adopting as your own, you will need to take time for yourself and make healthy eating and physical activity a priority. You have a choice to either keep your life in balance and enjoy your new and improved lifestyle, or to feel overwhelmed with the things you "should do" and the feelings of guilt when you can't keep up with what traditional diets demand. Having confidence and feeling good about yourself further motivates you to continue leading an enjoyable, healthy lifestyle, one that doesn't end when you have reached a short-term goal.

You have now read all of our recommendations on how to improve your health and live a low-fat life. Your greatest challenge, however, is not learning new low-fat shopping or cooking techniques. It is not learning how to accept yourself and avoid negative talk. Nor is it remembering how to calculate fat percentages or what to say to the waiter to reduce the fat in your restaurant meal. It isn't even making the time to exercise. The greatest challenge facing you at this moment is deciding whether you are willing to rid yourself of the diet mentality and begin living the GHF lifestyle that your body so greatly deserves.

You now have the knowledge and tools to make it happen. Are you willing to be patient and make gradual changes in your life that will lead to a healthier, happier you? Once you have made the decision to go forward and accept change, the hard part is over. Sure, there is plenty of work to be done, but it really doesn't matter how long this new process takes. If you allow changes to take place over several years, your body will adjust comfortably, and you will be more likely to maintain the healthy lifestyle permanently.

When you begin achieving improvements in energy and physical and psychological performance, the fun and excitement you experience will make the change well worth the effort. Action creates motivation! This is the way to implement a successful weight management program, free from rules and independent of weight loss. Good luck: We hope you enjoy all the wonderful benefits the GHF Weight Management program.