



## What Are Healthy Defaults?

Have you every wondered why you fall back into the same poor food choices and routines day after day, even when you are actively trying to be healthy and lose weight? Ever feel like willpower is just not enough?

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Default behaviors are those that are the easiest and often most convenient. They offer immediate reward, not necessarily focusing on long term consequences or benefits. It is less effort to go with the way things come or have always been instead of modifying or taking steps to do it differently. It is researched that the easiest choice will be the one most often made, even if known to be not the healthiest choice<sup>1,2</sup>.

This pamphlet will provide ways to make the healthy choice the easiest one.

## DO YOU SUFFER FROM DECISION FATIGUE?

Did you know that motivation and willpower to make healthy decisions when tired can be reduced? Foods that taste good and offer immediate reward and excitement can be chosen over healthier choices when the brain is exhausted and already made too many decisions in the day<sup>3</sup>.

### Have you ever felt this?

Yet another reason to make healthy choices the easiest and most convenient with tips listed inside.

## SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS.

Still struggling with making healthy changes? Talk to your doctor or find a registered dietitian near you for more nutrition guidance...

### References (abbreviated)

Photos courtesy of pixels free stock images.

1. Loewenstein G, Brennan T, Volpp KG. 2007.
2. Cohen DA. 2008.
3. Davis C, Levitan R, Puglia P, Bewell C, Kennedy J. 2012.
4. [www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html](http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html). 2016.



# CREATING HEALTHY EATING HABITS

Easy Strategies to Lose Weight & Make Healthy Nutrition Changes



## Strategies to Create Healthy Defaults to Lose Weight

Obesity is an epidemic that can lead to chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and more. 39.8% of Americans struggle with obesity<sup>4</sup>.

Creating new healthy defaults/habits can be hard. **Pick one new strategy to try at a time and see what works for you.**

### AT WORK/SCHOOL

- Pack lunches & snacks from home
- Take a snack break every few hours to prevent getting too hungry
- Keep water at your desk
- **Change route home to drive/walk past grocery store or farmers market instead of fast food restaurants**
- Remove candy and other office sweets
- Don't walk past vending machine or cafeteria where temptations may lie

### AT HOME

- Keep unhealthy food options out of house
- Pre-portion snack items into ziplock bags
- Keep healthy snack options in sight on counter or front of fridge
- Put away tempting foods - out of sight, out of mind
- Package up leftovers prior to eating to prevent going back for seconds
- Use smaller plates for meals
- Drink glass of water before meals
- Brush your teeth after dinner
- Meal prep and menu plan on weekends for the week
- **Dine at the table without distractions or screen time**

**SMALL CHANGES CAN LEAD TO IN BIG RESULTS!**

### AT THE GROCERY STORE

- Make a grocery list
- Stick to the perimeter of the store
- Avoid the marketing claims
- Read nutrition facts labels
- **Use To-Go grocery pickup services**
- Choose fresh or frozen vegetables vs. canned
- Get a small cart instead of larger one to limit room for impulse buys
- Keep your hands full in the checkout line to prevent picking up candy or extras while waiting

### ON A BUDGET

- Buy frozen fruits & vegetables instead of fresh
- Look at circulars and coupons
- Meal plan and only buy what you need
- Choose inexpensive protein sources such as eggs, beans, chicken, tuna fish, nuts
- Buy lean meats in bulk and freeze
- Portion out your own single serving snacks at home
- Cook in bulk and bring leftovers for lunch
- Drink water instead of purchased beverages
- **Make coffee at home instead of drive-thru where you may be more tempted to purchase unhealthy food choices to go with it**

### WHEN DINING OUT

- **Look at menu ahead of time and choose your meal**
- Forgo the bread
- Split meal with a friend
- Package half your meal up before eating
- Choose restaurants that offer healthier options or have calories listed on menus

