

BECOME COMMANDER AND CHIEF OF YOUR KITCHEN

In our previous article, we indicated that with a downturn in the economy since 2008, people have lessened their frequency of dining out – which makes it a terrible time to become a restaurant chef; but, it's a great time to become the head cook and Commander in Chief of your own kitchen! Before we discuss that any further, let's take a moment and go to our local fast-food restaurant or sit down establishment and let's say, as for many individuals, they crave a juicy cheeseburger. So in your mind's eye, let's order one.

Ahhhhh...but before you do, let's ask a few questions: Does this burger contain the leanest beef that meets your preference? Just how much fat is in the beef anyway and how old is the beef? How was the cow raised and fed to create the beef for the burger? Really...I don't think there is any way to answer those last 2 questions because a fast-food hamburger could contain beef from dozens of different cows. Has the burger been properly cooked? Was there some E-coli hanging around in the processing and/or handling of the beef? How many calories are in that burger? Certainly, even with most of the fast-food chains offering some nutritional information about their burgers, you can still easily get well over 1200 calories per burger. That's just about how many calories you should eat in total for all 3 meals in one day! Our daily requirement of calories for weight loss is your present weight x 7 = your daily calorie needs for weight loss. (Example: 150 lb. individual x 7 = 1,050 calories – if you're a calorie counter.)

Most burgers have a bun on it. Is the bun made from whole-grains or with refined flour that has a high glycemic index (the degree of sugar rush into your blood stream upon eating the food item). The higher the glycemic index the higher your odds of joining the now 1 in 3 Americans who will develop Diabetes in their lifetime. Is the bun fresh or how long has it been tanning under a sunlamp? And how about the condiments used on your sandwiches? Are they exactly what you want or are they exactly what have been decided upon by the people that market and then sell a particular style of burger? If those condiments include: ketchup, mayonnaise or even relish, they also contain high-fructose corn syrup – which has been shown to interfere with your body's ability to process the hormone Leptin, the very hormone that signals the brain and tells you when you're full. Or in this case with that particular hamburger, not full! So...we want more!

Most individuals don't just order the hamburger... you also ordered fries with that right? Are those fries cooked lightly with a coating of heart-healthy olive oil or were they bathed in trans-fatty acids which have been shown to raise your risk of obesity and heart disease? Lastly, you may want to wash all that down with a shake. Many shakes at a variety of fast-food establishments have well over 1600 calories in them. That's typically more than a whole day's worth of calories for an adult woman plus more saturated fat than we should eat in several days. Now that's just from the shake! You also get to finish your fries and burger with their load of saturated fat; and, we wonder why our waist size increases, our pocket book shrinks and diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol and triglyceride issues and hyperactivity among children and adults along with many other conditions are on the rise!

Now, what if you could eat the exact same meal at home except for a few slight differences? You would be able to eliminate a high percentage of the calories and most of the harmful fats; and at the same time, ensure that the food itself was actually fresh because you prepared it yourself. What about the cost? A typical burger, shake and side of fries at a low end restaurant, even debating the value meal and dollar menu mentality, is easily five dollars or more. At home, the cost value alone will be less saying nothing about all of the other aspects to be assessed.

We're not even going to talk about all the other crazy stories that occur about restaurant food and disgruntled chefs. I would like to list out for you however, some of the things you will gain by making the move to your own kitchen.

1. You will end up losing weight and looking/feeling better by making healthy choices. Better choices will keep your resting metabolism more optimum and you won't be letting yourself go hungry. By eating foods that will help you burn fat all day, every day; you're going to feel better.
2. You'll reshape your body by staying full and retain lean muscle while trimming excess fat; the so-called body sculpting that many T.V. infomercials are marketing. The difference is rather than forcing you to cut down on the amount of food that usually accompanies dieting; you'll be able to eat better food over a longer period of time and as much as you want of it.
3. When you command your own kitchen, everything is under your control and you will ultimately save time and stress. If you want eggplant instead of zucchini with your steak; make it so. Do you like a little cinnamon in your pancake mix? Do it! You don't like those little sesame things on a bun that stick in between your teeth – do not allow them to set up residence in your kitchen territory. By creating a menu for the week, you will be able to predetermine your shopping list. Sticking with your list reduces the impulse buying which occurs for many while they are at the supermarket. Keeping these menus over the course of just one month allows for a real diversity of daily meals that can be easily mixed and matched to make future meal planning even easier. You could even place the different daily meal plans on the table like a deck of cards and let the rest of the family choose what they want on a per day basis. You've just solved the, "I didn't want to eat that today," comments. Even if you went along with that suggestion, being in your kitchen you could change the meal plan for the day.
4. Another aspect of what you'll gain by cooking meals yourself is the enjoyment of the discovery process. Meal selection, and especially the way you prepare it has countless variations. Learning how to do stir-fry instead of deep-fry can be a fun-filled journey of discovery if you allow it. Am I implying that attitude has a great deal to do with your enjoyment factor in cooking for yourself and your family? Attitude is everything! The vast amount of meal planning and healthy cooking information has never been more accessible; from: sugar-free, gluten-free, low fat, to using a Wok can be found in bookstores, on the internet and even T.V. You-tube has interested people doing all kinds of self-help demonstrations on every possible food category imaginable. It's a matter of your interest being peaked enough to spend a little time and do some investigation. If the average American adult spends 4 ½ hours watching T.V. per day – what if a person just spent 30 minutes a day researching about food and how to prepare it. Your knowledge base would grow in leaps and bounds in no time at all.

I believe that the time to take back control of your weight, health, your wallet and your life is NOW! Every moment looking back on the what ifs, keeps us from moving forward! The time to do something is now!

But we must address one more issue. I hear it all too frequently from my patients. It's the, "I don't have time to cook, yeah but... excuse." Well, people say they don't have time to cook; to me that's a little odd. These same people have time to get in the car and drive to a restaurant and wait for someone to make their dinner. These same individuals stop more than twice a week at their supermarket to buy something to toss in the microwave and stand there eating it by the kitchen sink. It's fair to say, that there are individuals that are just extremely busy. Yet, those same individuals with appropriate planning can easily find time for a healthier diet that they themselves could be providing. Certainly... for the people that have time to go to the restaurant and wait for their meal or go to the supermarket to buy something to throw in the microwave – they have time to cook.

The majority of good meals take less than 30 minutes to prepare. Amazingly enough, on occasion, a whole bunch of cut-up vegetables and dip can be a quick, easy and very healthy meal alternative. Spending 30 minutes just once per week cutting up fresh veggies and storing them in a "green bag" will give you enough for healthy snacking and meal time steaming for the whole week. If you analyze the amount of time that you presently spend going to restaurants and the supermarket, you'll find that with pre-planning, you will actually

spend less time in the store than you usually do because you'll shop once and eat for the entire week; instead of having to pop in on multiple visits to find something to thaw, heat-up or nuke. So, in reality...by trying to become more organized about your eating lifestyle there is nothing negative to lose and something positive to gain; you can lose weight and gain money and better health! So when it comes to cooking and eating good, healthy food, you don't need a whole lot; a few sturdy pots and pans and a handful of reliable kitchen staples. Most importantly, you need to take command of the kitchen with an attitude of discovery. Meals don't cook themselves, so it's time to get started. Cooking for improved health is not a destination – but, a journey of discovery! Enjoy it!

For more information pertaining to our “Healthy Life by Design” program, please visit us on the web: www.naturalwellnesscentre.net. This article is authored by Dr. James R. Grilliot, a chiropractic physician and director of Natural Wellness Centre; phone number: 740-687-0279.