

# Together We Can

Fall 2009 Newsletter  
NYS Capital District Intergroup  
Overeaters Anonymous

**This issue deals with the everyday aspects of food planning and staying abstinent no matter what circumstances life brings. Be aware that some articles mention specific foods.**

## My Tips for Dealing with Food When Traveling

I travel a lot and have found several useful strategies for dealing with food away from home. Here are some of my travel tips:

- Always ask for a room with a fridge. Most hotels have a microwave available even if it isn't in your room, just ask.
- Be creative. I have used the coffee maker in my hotel room to make hot cereal or to warm up something I have brought with me.
- Know your limits. I avoid hotel breakfasts and evening socials entirely because free food is really hard for me to pass up.
- Thru-way rest stops have come a long way. They now offer fresh fruit, hard boiled eggs, and fresh vegetables at many of the stops.
- Single serving packages of nuts are easy to pack and take along.
- Most restaurants now have a web presence. Plan ahead. Check out menus online before you get there to avoid impulse choices when you're tired and hungry.
- Plan for the return home. I try to plan out my first meals when I get home and have them prepared as much as possible before I leave. Returning from a trip is often when I am most vulnerable.

— Maureen W.

## Restaurant Eating (Using a Take-Out Box as a Tool)

My food plan is flexible and easily allows for restaurant eating. The problem is that the portions served in most restaurants are outrageously large, and once I start eating something, I am not inclined to stop—even when full. So, it is important for me to re-size the meal appropriately *before* I take the first bite. Whenever I order a restaurant meal, I also order a take-out box to be brought to the table before the meal arrives. When my meal arrives, I immediately put *at least half* of the meal in the take-out box. Then, I look to see that the remaining food is proportioned appropriately: protein, carbs, veggies, and fruit. Sometimes I will put more food into the box at this point. Then, when I have the right amount for me on the plate, I can start eating. Sometimes what is left looks like it's not enough. In those cases, I pray to HP that what I have on my plate will satisfy me. Occasionally, I will feel full before I have finished what is on my plate, and I actually move more from the plate to the box, but my hard and fast rule is that once it is in the box, it stays in the box. There is no trading something on my plate for something in the box either!

—Kathy T

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## **What Helps Me Stay on My Food Plan**

What helps me stay on my food plan? I have found, over the years, that the phrase, “fail to plan, plan to fail” is very appropriate. Planning ahead is very important to me, especially when my life is a little more hectic than usual or when I am traveling.

Breakfast is my most important meal of the day, whether at home or away. Breakfast is also my favorite meal, so I make sure and measure to be sure I don’t slowly increase my portions. My other meals are not measured, except for possibly rice, because, quite frankly, I am not particularly fond of vegetables, protein, etc. and would not want to overeat them.

I have lunch, an afternoon snack, and dinner. These are quite flexible in that I just make sure I have protein, vegetables, starch, and dairy. If I am at a restaurant, I do my best to include these food groups and if the portions are large, leave some on my plate.

When traveling, my cooler is my companion. I bring along water, fruit, cheese sticks or other abstinent foods. If they are not with me and I get shaky and hungry, who knows what I will eat...certainly not something that I should eat! Hope this helps someone. A joyful abstinence to all!

— Linda L.

## **Circling in the Kitchen**

One morning I called my sponsor because I was “circling in the kitchen.” Like a vulture, I was going from cabinet to cabinet and refrigerator to pantry looking for *something* I could eat. I was neither hungry nor was it time to eat. My sponsor’s suggestion was that I set the microwave timer for 20 minutes and sit and write continuously without looking at the clock until I heard the timer ring. I was to write a gratitude list! I didn’t think I could

possibly write that long. I started slowly, but once I got into it, I thought of so many things to add to my list that I was truly surprised when I heard the timer go off. Best of all, I was in a very different state of mind. My cravings were gone, and I left the kitchen and went about my day abstinely.  
— Kathy T.

## **Planning Ahead to Eat Healthy**

One aspect of my compulsive overeating was being a self-described “foodie.” I took pride in knowing the delicacies of a geographic area – sometimes planning vacations to sample some food or a famous restaurant. I owned 50-100 cookbooks. I tried making many delicacies myself and many friends and relatives say I am a good cook.

When I got on a food plan however, I thought my “foodie” days were over. My food plan is weighed and measured and relies mainly on whole foods. There is no wheat flour and no sugar, no caffeine, no alcohol. The “no sugar” stipulation made it such that I cannot use many commercially prepared condiments, marinades or sauces. I was certain that this meant a drab, plain as beige diet. However, my character defect of “foodie” behavior that fed my disease, is one of those defects that when used properly, can be an asset to my recovery. Here are some ways I use my knowledge of food and desire for high quality, diverse, and interesting tastes to my advantage in abstinence:

I cook for myself and seek out the freshest produce and meats. I joined a CSA, which provides a good portion of my vegetables for the year. A CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) is a local farm funded by members of the community.

I also have an arrangement with a farm out in Cobleskill, which raises livestock in a free range, organic method. I pre-ordered some

chickens for the months of May through October.

I spend time every Sunday- an hour planning menus for the week and creating a grocery list, and another hour to hour and a half grocery shopping. I keep in mind busy weeknight evenings and plan quicker-cooking meals or leftovers accordingly. I also get up early on Monday mornings and make a giant salad for my husband and I to use for lunches during the week

I read labels. There are some condiments without sugar, but they can be hard to find. Many types of mustard fit the bill. They also make vinaigrette that makes a terrific marinade for grilled vegetables.

I still don't watch cooking shows, and I got rid of fully one third of my cookbooks. But I have learned many ways of finding high quality delicious meals that turn my interest and knowledge of food and cooking into an asset to my abstinence rather than a character defect that feeds my disease.

— Elaine B.

### **Abstinence WSO Amended Definition**

*From the OA web site:*

*Abstinence Definition Amended WSBC Policy 1988b (amended 2002, 2009) defines abstinence and recovery as follows:*

“Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program.”

### **Managing My Food Choices**

If I manage my food choices, I can remain happy, joyous and free (instead of trapped, irritable and confused.) My eating every 3 hours for a total of 5 times a day keeps my blood sugar stable. Boric surgery in 2000 requires that I eat only certain foods in small amounts. I have been able to keep 100 pounds off in this way, along with aerobic and weight bearing exercises. There is no alcohol in my plan or preservatives.

I avoid deep fried, overly hot spices, and sugar and sugar substitutes. As a former diabetic, I know I need whole foods. Eating wisely has enabled me to avoid all medication for the control of my blood sugar readings. I've maintained my A1c readings below 5.6 for eight years.

So, what am I choosing?

Whole grains, fresh fruit, lean protein, fresh vegetables and fresh low fat dairy. In the car, I keep a packet of 15 grams of carbohydrate for low blood sugar which can occur if I have not eaten for over 3 hours. I also keep emergency protein bars and whole grain bite size items this can be reached while driving.

I always bring a dish of one food group to a gathering so I know I can take good care of myself at a party or barbeque. Cold or hot beverages are always packed to hydrate. Bottled water is purchased by the case.

I want to live a long, long time. Although no magic keeps me fit, there is a great deal of the miraculous. Every day I get to use less denial and more of the honesty to reach out to others in recovery. They lift me up and sustain me as I create a new way of living.

— Jeanne P.

## **New Rate for *Lifeline* Subscriptions**

According to a recent WSO announcement, the *Lifeline* magazine has been operating at a deficit for several years. This year the OA Board of Trustees researched ways to reduce or eliminate the deficit, and it was clear that subscription prices would have to be increased. Effective August 22<sup>nd</sup> the annual subscription price for ten print *Lifeline* issues in the U.S. rose to \$23. Subscriptions for e-*Lifeline* remain at \$13.

## **Editorial Policy**

*Together We Can* (TWC) is the newsletter of the New York State Capital District Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous. Submissions will appear with the first name and last initial unless otherwise requested. Materials cannot be returned nor can payment be made. *Together We Can* reserves the right to edit submissions for length and clarity. Other OA groups may reprint without permission. We ask that you cite the writer and *Together We Can* as your source. The opinions expressed are those of the individual writer and not those of NYSCD IG or OA as a whole. Please address all submissions and suggestions to *Together We Can* to NYSCD IG of OA.

## **Intergroup Meetings**

Intergroup always meets the second Saturday of the month. Meetings are in Saratoga in even-numbered months and in Albany in odd-numbered months. See the brochure New York State Capital District Intergroup for more information on Intergroup, what it does and does not do, and how you can participate.