Dakota Wellness Program
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Inside this issue...
Emotional eating
Monthly book club
Financial mindset
Workday snacking
Motivation app
Managing emotional hunger
Whole grain salad

Join us for a 15 minute webinar Emotional Eating on August 11 to explore how to eat for joy AND satisfaction.

Click here to register today!
Food and mood: Why did I eat that?

The term emotional eating often brings to mind ice cream after a breakup or ordering a pizza after a long workday.

Negative and positive moods lead to preferences for different kinds of foods. If someone is choosing between grapes and candy they are more likely to choose grapes if they are in a good mood and candy when in a bad mood. If we make a food choice that feels indulgent we are giving ourselves a small burst of instant gratification in the form of dopamine, a pleasure hormone. When we are in a bad mood that push for instant gratification becomes even stronger as we hope to offset our bad day.

How can we make healthy choices even when we are in a bad mood? Don’t throw away all your indulgent snacks, instead:

- Put them in a cupboard that you don’t open frequently
- Have healthy snacks in a more prominent place so you see them right away
- Take a pause and check in with yourself, see the Activate section of our newsletter for steps to manage your emotional hunger

Food is both fuel and pleasure. By allowing ourselves to enjoy both foods that are good for us and foods that we eat for simply the taste we cut down on the instant gratification factor of emotional eating. A focus on including healthy foods rather than excluding less-healthy foods allows us to make choices based on logic rather than emotion.

Book Club

The Mind-Gut Connection: How the Hidden Conversation Within Our Bodies Impacts Our Mood, Our Choices, and Our Overall Health by Emeran Mayer

Combining cutting-edge neuroscience with the latest discoveries on the human microbiome, this book is a practical guide to help you understand the link between mind and the body. Did you know that the bacteria in your gut can influence your mood? In The Mind-Gut Connection, Dr. Emeran Mayer, executive director of the UCLA Center for Neurobiology of Stress, offers a revolutionary look at this developing science, teaching us how to harness the power of a healthy gut to take charge of our emotional health.

We experience connections between our mind and gut every day. When a decision just “felt right” or you had butterflies in your stomach before a big meeting. The Mind-Gut Connection shows you how to keep the brain-gut communication clear and balanced so this system can function at its best. This book will guide you through lifestyle changes to remove harmful bacteria in your body, lose weight and boost immunity. Not only can you experience physical changes to your health, but a healthier gut can also improve your mindset and moods.

Discussion questions

1. How does the microbiome impact serotonin levels in the brain?
2. After reading this book how will you increase your fiber intake?
3. Did this book encourage you to try any new plant based recipes?
4. Have you tried any fermented foods, what did you think? If not are you willing to try a fermented food?
Give it a try...

**Fabulous: Daily Planner & Self-Care Habit Tracker**

Struggling with healthy habits is common. There are many tips and tricks out there to help you stick to new healthy behaviors, but it is hard to know what will work for you. Giving new habits a run through is a great way to discover what works and does not work for you.

This science-based app takes the best of behavioral science discoveries to help you to develop healthy rituals that you will stick with. It suggests simple, quick and easy practices to get you started. Then you can move onto more intensive options and progress as you want.

Features of the app include:
- Prompts and reminders at specific times
- Morning, afternoon and evening routines of several habits to build a foundation of health
- New and exciting challenges in topics like meditation, reading, gratitude and healthy eating
- Editorials and infographics on health and wellness topics

Download it today.

**Financial mindset**

Your perspective—or mindset—surrounding your financial health is something you can control. The value and meaning that you put on money is what creates your financial mindset. Money is neutral—it’s not good nor bad.

A scarcity mindset means that you feel like there is never enough. This mindset is really only true when you are struggling to meet your basic needs for items like food and housing. But, many still have this mindset when they cannot do the activities they want to or are trying to keep up with others. You may also feel shame surrounding money habits in this type of mindset.

A mindset of abundance is defined as the feeling of having enough financial means. You feel in control of your income. Negative feelings around money and your financial well-being are less frequent and are mostly positive.

A scarcity mindset often leads to self-sabotage and decreased ability to follow through with money goals. To create an abundant mindset you can:
- Identify what is just a thought or feeling and separate it from facts about money like “I don’t make enough” vs. “How much income do I make?”
- Examine the meaning you place on money
- What negative thoughts and feelings do I have about money? Where did they come from?

**Snacking during your workday**

Use your snack time as an opportunity to get in some extra nutrients in between meals. Keeping healthy snacks in the office will help boost energy while keeping you satisfied, avoiding an afternoon energy crash.

- If buying in bulk, pre-portion the snacks out to avoid over-snacking. This works well for foods that come in a big box like whole grain crackers or nuts.
- Take advantage of your office fridge and store some fresh fruit, vegetables with a dip, yogurt or cheese.
- Stock a close by drawer with no added sugar fruit cups, bars with at least 4 grams of fiber and turkey jerky.

It is a good idea to have variety of snack options for your workday, so that you have multiple foods to satisfy you. Listen to your hunger and enjoy a snack, whether it is eating one or two during your workday to keep feeling satisfied.

When picking snacks to refuel for your workday focus on foods that provide fiber, healthy fats, and protein to feel satisfied.
Activate!
DISCOVER YOUR EMOTIONAL EATING PATTERNS
We all experience several different emotions every day. Food has a place in resetting our mood and we have a biological drive to use food to improve our mood. By providing comfort, distraction or even sedation, eating can be a way to cover up our current feelings.

Here are four important questions to ask yourself if you feel that you are eating in reaction to your current mood.

1: **Am I physically hungry?** If yes—honor your hunger. Have a sensible portion of the food you are craving. If your answer to this question is no—continue onto question two.

2: **Describe how you are currently feeling?** Write out or just sit and experience your current emotions.

3: **What do I need right now?** Unmet needs may be physical or emotional. Physical needs may be sleep/rest or a need to get up and move around. Emotional needs may be acceptance, understanding, comfort, creativity or self-expression.

4: **How can I meet my need without food?** Call/text a friend or family member, seek out a favorite stress reliever or set a longer-term goal to find out what re-energizes you outside of the pantry.

With a more constant stream of comfort coming from other avenues than food, you can develop a new set of strategies and be better prepared to face changes in emotions and mood that you experience throughout your day.

Farro (ancient grain) herb salad
Serves: 8  
Total Time: 60 min | Prep: 15 min

**Ingredients:**
- 1 cup farro
- 1 cucumber, diced
- 1 large yellow pepper, diced
- 1 small tomato, diced
- 2 cups fresh herbs like parsley, mint, chives or basil
- 1 cup canned chickpeas (garbonzo beans), drained and rinsed
- Juice of 2 lemons, or about 4 tablespoons
- ¼ cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

**Directions:**
Cook farro according to package directions in simmering water. While farro is cooking, dice cucumber, pepper, tomatoes and fresh herbs of your taste and liking. Drain and rinse canned chickpeas. Add vegetables, herbs and chickpeas to a large bowl. Drain and rinse cooked farro in a strainer with cold water to quickly cool. After cooled, add to veggies and herbs. Drizzle with lemon and olive oil and toss. Add salt and pepper to taste. Store in refrigerator for 30 minutes to develop flavors or eat right away.

**Nutrition Facts:**
Calories: 184    Total Fat: 8g    Sodium: 56mg    Total Carbohydrates: 25g    Dietary Fiber: 4g    Total Protein: 5g

Nutrition information compiled using MyNetDiary.com