

## **Planning for deviations, learning to bend so you don't break.**

By Lisa Schilling RN

**Healthy eating is all about motivation, balance and flexibility.** There will be times when you blow it. This happens – it's normal. It is very important that you don't get discouraged and abandon your new healthy lifestyle when it does happen. Feeling defeated, many people discontinue the healthy living all together or plan to 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 *diet mentality* at work. This is REAL life and you will stray off the path. With the non-diet approach, there is **no such thing as cheating**. When people feel they are cheating, they often punish themselves; causing guilt and feelings of frustration and defeat. Replacing the negative concept of "cheating" with the idea of "briefly straying from healthy habits" takes away the "all-or-nothing" emphasis on right and wrong. You cannot treat every deviation as a *failure*.

Often people choose very "structured" programs because they *relieve* them from making choices. 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. It is actually 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! When you give in to the cascading events that can follow the initial indulgence, you start a self-defeating cycle that leads you back to your comfortable and familiar ways. Remember, one day's behavior will not *make or break* your plan. It is a *pattern* of behavior that determines your outcome.

No one wants to suffer through a "lose weight quick plan" only to end up heavier than before they started it. To successfully maintain weight loss you, must commit to a *lifestyle* that supports consistent healthy

behaviors. Many people cycle through patterns of hyper-discipline and then such frustration (burn-outs) that they end up choosing no personal discipline. This **all-or-nothing** cycle is why many people have so little success. You can learn to live healthy as a rule and allow yourselves a few deviations from your plan. Deviation happens in the REAL world, and any plan that does not gently guide you back will send you running to the "**all-or-nothing**" land from which you came. The savvy person realizes this and plans for it.

For the past few decades, experts have recommended a diet high in carbohydrates and low in fat. As a result, many people base the bulk of their diet in carbohydrates. These are starchy and sugary foods or foods that are metabolized like sugar in the body, some of which are good for you like corn, potatoes and whole grain bread. People on this type of diet often feel unnecessary guilty for eating "fat" from any source. Since this plan has been widely embraced, we have seen the obesity epidemic **increase**, not decrease as experts would have hoped. This type of diet often leads people to have increased cravings and leaves them feeling hungry. A good plan involves a solid balance of protein, fat and carbs. To balance quick carbohydrates and sugars, you need to eat them with a protein, dietary fat or complex carbohydrate source to sustain your blood sugar and **reduce** cravings.

If you get enough nutritious foods, balance your eating with protein and have extra calories in your *budget*, you can eat whatever food you desire. Give your body what it needs and in a combination that promotes a proper balance. Your cravings can be reduced and your feelings of satisfaction increased. In return for this new way of eating your body will function better and more efficiently. Give it a try! Next week we will look at Carb Sensitivity.