

# HEALTHFUL TIPS

HEALTH AND FITNESS TIPS FOR YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY

## Combating Head Hunger



**What is Head Hunger?** Head Hunger is very real and even feels like real hunger, but if you are truly listening to your body (and not your head)... you will realize Head Hunger is that thing that makes you THINK you want to eat even when you know you're already full or when you know you have already eaten enough that you SHOULD be full. It's that demon that you have to fight, its triggered by emotional, psychological, stress and other triggers that we all have. It's one of the hardest things to fight after WLS because it FEELS like its REAL hunger, you have stomach pangs and its screaming for attention.... but you aren't REALLY hungry—you're just obsessing or stressed or emotional or whatever other label you want to put on it. Head Hunger is real and must be overcome. I fight it on a regular basis; unfortunately there is no surgery out there to help you get rid of it, it's something you have to battle on your own!

Often times you will hear Head Hunger referred to as the Loophole to Gastric Bypass Surgery. What they mean by that is that Head Hunger is blamed for weight gain after gastric bypass because people allow it to win and they eat what they shouldn't and when they shouldn't. We all have it just some of us have it for food while others of us have it for success or wealth, happiness or love.... Head Hunger is whatever you make it. For me... it's the enemy! It's the dragon that must be slain!

—Tracy C., Barix Support Group Leader

### Come Up With A Plan Ahead Of Time To Overcome The Urge To Overeat.

It may be to include a "controlled treat" such as a sugar free fudgesicle, listening to calming music, having a favorite sugar free drink, taking a bubble bath, going for a short walk, cleaning a closet, calling a friend, the list can go on and on. Just commit to trying an activity when you identify the urge to give into head hunger.

❖ **TIME.** Learn to identify times when you are greater risk of overeating—it may be mid morning, the afternoon slump, dinner at a restaurant, evening hours while on the computer or watching TV. Be sure to eat regular meals and snacks to prevent physical hunger. Include a source of protein at each meal and snack to keep blood sugar levels even.

❖ **VISUAL TRIGGERS.** Just seeing chocolate may trigger the desire for it. The donuts in the break room may overpower you. Driving by your favorite fast food restaurant may start you salivating for you a not-so-healthy food. Commercials may be your trigger-especially during the evening hours. Become aware of triggers and learn to avoid them or find another response. Keep temptations out of sight and out of reach. Don't allow yourself to eat while watching TV. Go for a walk or other activity instead of indulging.

❖ **EMOTIONS.** Anger, fear, frustration, stress, joy, happiness, and boredom can all trigger the desire to eat. Feel the feeling rather than numbing out with food. Even the strongest of emotions will subside on their own.

❖ **SPECIAL OCCASIONS.** Rather than focusing on the food, focus on the other people and activities. Do not allow special occasions and holidays to be a free for all.

❖ **FORBIDDEN FOODS.** Find new sugar free treats to replace your favorite sugar laden foods. Remember to indulge in moderation. Assess your attitude—are these foods really that desirable?