



## Quitting the Bedtime Snack Habit

I frequently write about emotional or stress eating, but sometimes our way of eating has just become a habit. We get into a routine and it can be hard to break. Bedtime snacks are a good example.

I've increased my exercise lately, and sometimes I really am hungry at bedtime. But after snacking two nights, by the third night it begins to feel like a habit and I have a vague sense of being hungry even though I don't think I really am.

When we eat for stress or emotions, it is often for a reason. The food is filling in for something else (loneliness, anxiety, boredom, etc.) With habit, there may have initially been a reason, but over time the reason is forgotten and the habit continues. It just turns in to something we do.

How do we change these habits that no longer serve us? Try substitution. You can try substituting other foods that are easier to stop eating, or you can substitute other activities.

For example, once you get used to having a snack at bedtime it may be hard to get to sleep without it. But you can gradually wean off the snack. Depending on how entrenched the habit is, you may need to begin by just cutting back on the portion size. Or you can try substituting something lighter.

Once you get used to the lighter snack, you can switch it something lighter yet. I've found herb tea is an effective switch. It is satisfying enough to be a reasonable substitute and it is an easy habit to stop.

Some medical situations, like taking certain types of insulin, require bedtime snacks, and sometimes you really are hungry. When you eat before sleeping, make healthy food choices.

Choose foods that are dairy or whole grain, low in fat, and with a little protein—these foods are thought to be helpful in promoting sleep. Plain lowfat yogurt, milk or cottage cheese are good examples.

You can also change your bedtime routine. Instead of using food as a signal that you are slowing down and getting ready to sleep, develop other bedtime habits that are calming. Read, do light stretches, journal, meditate or pray to help you shift from being active to becoming quiet.

If you don't need extra calories, try these suggestions to break the bedtime snacking habit and create a new healthy habit.

## Blog Alert

I've been blogging for over a year now! I post to my blog twice a week. These short, frequent posts give me an opportunity to cover a wide variety of nutrition topics and tips.

If you enjoy my newsletters, you might also enjoy my blog posts. I post recipes and cooking tips; I've included links to some of these in past newsletters. I write about nutrition findings, my take on the news, and little tidbits that I think would be helpful for my friends and clients. Only I've never really gotten the word out about it—so here it is.

For example, I've written about what to look for in ground meat, how to roast vegetables, the difference between 2% and 1% milk, and some recent concerns that we could be getting too much folic acid.

If you would like the option to see my blog posts as I write them, you can subscribe on the blog itself. Then you will have them available and can read what catches your interest.

Subscribe by opening the blog:

[HealthyHabitsCoach.wordpress.com](http://HealthyHabitsCoach.wordpress.com). Click on the orange feed button in the top right corner where it says "Posts". The screen will change and at the top you are given the option to "subscribe to this feed". Click that and new posts will then show up in your email box under the category "RSS feeds" (or something similar).

One fun thing about blogs is that you get to comment—so if you read my blog posts and have thoughts or comments about the topic, share them! We can learn from each other.

## Tomato Salad

We were almost giddy the first time tomatoes showed up in our farm box. "Tomato Salad!" shouted Bill. The photo shows the delicious results. We layered cucumbers, tomatoes, thinly sliced red onion, basil and feta cheese. Then we drizzled our favorite balsamic vinaigrette over it and added fresh ground pepper. Yum! See my blog for the vinaigrette recipe: <http://tiny.cc/C2KEU>.



**Want Support?** *Many of my clients know what to eat but want support with actually doing it. It helps to have someone help you choose a strategy and stay focused. Sessions range from 30 min by phone to 1-2 hours in person. Call me to discuss what would work best for you.*

## Kathy Nichols: Life Coach & Registered Dietitian

Are you ready to stop dieting and looking for a way of eating that is sustainable, enjoyable and healthy?

*Discover Wellness from the Inside Out!*

