

Some Healthy Habits Take Time

Many of our habits are deeply rooted. If you habitually eat food because it's there, that is not going to change overnight. When you can recognize the rhythm of change, you can see progress even when it feels like failure.

As an example, let's say you want to pause and breathe before impulsive eating. Then someone brings scones to your work meeting, and you eat one before you remember to pause and breathe first. Did you fail? Not necessarily: even if you remembered after the fact, you still remembered. It's a start.

Keep paying attention, and after awhile you will find that you remember *as* you eat the scone. You still ate the scone, but by remembering sooner you are moving in the right direction.

Keep remembering, keep coming back to the intention of pausing and taking some deep breaths. Eventually you will remember soon enough to actually pause and breathe *before* eating. *Then* you can choose whether or not to eat the scone.

Even if you choose the scone, it will be a conscious decision and not mindlessly eating it just because it's there. Taking the time to pause and refocus with your breath allows you to get centered and be thoughtful about what you put in your mouth.

When you eat food just because it is there, you're at the mercy of the environment. Changing old habits takes time, so don't give up! Focus on the progress and allow your brain time to rewire.

Score with Whole Grains

How much whole grain do you *really* get in your day? Whole wheat bread is a good start, but it's not enough. High fiber cereals can be helpful, although many are highly processed and some are made from refined grains with fiber added. That hardly counts.

Refined grains (like "wheat flour", white rice and pasta, and French bread) are stripped of nutrients and digest quickly. This raises blood sugar and leaves you hungry again too soon. They also raise blood levels of triglycerides, which increases your risk for heart disease and diabetes. I find that most people eat far more refined carbohydrates than they think.

There are all kinds of delicious whole grains with excellent nutrition profiles. Every day choose some grains that are minimally processed. For example wheat berries have a lower glycemic index (impact on blood sugar) than whole wheat flour. Because they have more fiber, wheat berries are more filling and keep you full longer.

It is wise to eat a variety of grains. If you are not paying attention, it's easy to eat various forms of wheat at every meal: toast or cereal for breakfast, sandwich at lunch, pasta at din-



ner. Many alternative health practitioners recommend avoiding wheat altogether. So far I don't go to that extreme, but I think it probably *is* a good idea to eat less of it. Sprouted wheat is easier to digest and provides a good alternative. Here are ideas to help expand your whole grain horizons.

Wheat Berries, Oat Berries and Barley: Cook by themselves or add to brown rice. When cooking alone, use 3 ½ - 4 cups water to 1 cup of these grains. Allow ~2 hours cooking time. These work well in a rice cooker or pressure cooker. When mixed with rice, I use less water resulting in a chewier texture: ½ cups wheat berries (or oat berries or barley) and ½ cup brown rice with 2 ½ cups water. Experiment with different kinds of wheat berries, made from the different kinds of wheat: hard winter wheat and semolina are two examples.

Freekeh and Couscous: These are grains made from wheat (and sometimes barley). Freekeh is roasted green wheat, and native to the eastern Mediterranean and parts of North Africa. I've not actually seen it yet, but I've read about it so assume it will show up in local stores soon. Both of these grains can be refined, so read labels.

Quinoa: This ancient Peruvian grain is an excellent source of complete protein. It is thought to be easier to digest than wheat. Make it like rice with a 2:1 water to quinoa ratio. Fluff once cooked. See past blog posts for quinoa salad recipes.

Brown, Red and Black Rice: Brown rice is a healthy food, and black rice is even healthier. Just like blueberries, black rice contains anthocyanins, a powerful antioxidant found in red, purple and blue (or black) foods.

Yams and Winter Squash: These are not actually grains, but they are excellent high fiber starches. Use these more often than potatoes since they have less impact on blood sugar. Roast yams in their skins and then freeze for a quick lunch.

Recipe for the Month

Wheat Berry Salad

Click the links to the recipe, or find it on my blog at www.HealthyHabitsCoach.wordpress.com.

How Does Your Diet Score?

With all the new research on nutrients, some of our old ideas of what is healthy is no longer true. A nutrition consult can be a great way to fine-tune your diet and give you peace of mind. Contact me via kathy@healthyhabitscoach.com

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!

