

## ***Make Your Own Game Plan!***

### **Over the past week you took note of:**

- The times you felt hungriest.
- The types of foods that were your “go-to” choices to satisfy whatever craving you were having.



## ***Now what?***

*Well, the first step is to make a concrete plan. Planning snacks and meals ahead of time can help keep your eating on track and control portions and calories. Having healthy foods readily available to you can help you establish healthy eating habits that we mentioned last time.*

*The idea is to make the foods that are in the “better choices” category (e.g., fruits, vegetables, lean proteins) as convenient to reach for as the unhealthy choices (e.g., bag of chips, muffin, etc.)*

## ***Best of all – It isn’t about avoiding food!***

*In fact, it’s about getting more involved in your food choices. First, plan a weekly grocery shopping time. This helps you by having a ready supply of better choices available. Always have basics on hand in your kitchen, such as: vegetables and fruit; whole grain bread, whole grain pasta, and brown rice; low-fat milk, yogurt, cheese; lean meat, fish, poultry; tofu; eggs; beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds.*

## You can then start adding to your routine by doing a few things:

### 1. Plan ahead

**Take the spur-of-the-moment factor out of eating.** By having a more structured plan and eating before you're hungry, you're less likely to be in the situation of having an extreme snack attack. Eating a mini-meal (e.g., some grapes and a bit of low-fat cheese) before your tummy starts growling makes it less likely you'll dive into the doughnuts someone brought to the office.

### 2. Start batch cooking and freezing food

**Prepping healthy snacks and meals ahead of time is worth the time and effort** and will help make it easier for you to make healthy food choices without the fuss. Pick a time when you can relax and enjoy preparing some quick and easy choices for the week ahead. Choose a good low-fat, high-fibre, slow-cooker recipe (e.g., 3-bean vegetarian or turkey chili) and save it in serving-size portions. Prepare your own chicken, fish, or veggie patties. Freeze some homemade or store-bought pesto in ice-cube trays to use as a fast sauce for whole grain pasta or to serve with meat or fish.

### 3. Keep pre-cut vegetables and ready-to-eat fruit on hand

**Instead of piling everything into the fridge when you get home from the store, take a few minutes to wash, peel, and chop fruits and vegetables into serving size portions.** Steam some of your favourite veggies to have on hand so they're ready to add onto your plate alongside whatever meat/fish/protein you make at dinner time throughout the week. Buy frozen cubed or chopped vegetables to be able to heat them quickly or toss them into recipes. Even fruits are available frozen if they are out of season.

### 4. Choose foods you love!

**Healthy eating doesn't mean denying yourself the flavours and tastes you love.** It means getting a bit creative and focusing your attention on old favourites and adding a healthy twist and making new food discoveries. If you love berries, stir some into some low-fat Greek yogourt. Browse fruit and vegetable markets to see what new items catch your eye and ask how to prepare them. Fill your cart with a wide variety of colourful fruits/vegetables so you'll have them at your fingertips!



## What Can I Do?

In addition to taking any prescribed medication regularly and as prescribed by your doctor, start getting into a food routine. We already spoke about getting into a shopping and prepping routine. It's also important to add some structure to your eating. Instead of wandering to the fridge or pantry at whim, let's take another look at the questions to ask yourself to get into new, healthier habits:

### When?

- **Last week you started taking notice when you were hungriest.** Schedule healthy snacks a half-hour or so before those times and ensure you eat them, even if you aren't hungry. The idea is to not wait until you're starving to eat because that's when it's easy to lose control and overeat.

### Why?

- **Over the last week did you notice if you tended to crave food as comfort or as a reward?** Instead of using food as the solution, is there anything else you can do? Maybe go for a quick walk to burn off steam or give yourself time to read a book you've been putting off. Start finding other ways to pamper or treat yourself instead of using food to fill that gap.

### What?

- **Chances are you have a pretty good idea what your go-to foods are.** What healthy foods could substitute for your less healthy favourites? Maybe a crisp dill pickle would give you that crunch you crave. Try a small piece of dark chocolate and savour that instead of a large chocolate bar. Also, out of sight is out of mind – stock your pantry and fridge with healthy snacks instead!

### Where?

- **If you tend to get hungry in the car or at work, have some portable options at the ready.** A baggie of: cucumber sticks with some salt-free seasoning; a few small pieces of low-fat cheese; some slices of fresh mango with some sriracha sauce; or any other healthy choices that work for you.

### Who?

- Do you let yourself eat unhealthily if you're with a certain person or after dealing with a stressful situation or person? You may want to choose non-eating-related activities to enjoy with your eating buddy (maybe ask if they want to be your walking partner instead). You may want to write down how you feel after dealing with someone or something unpleasant rather than "eating" those feelings. **Jot your thoughts in a small notebook or in a memo app on your phone to get them off your chest.**

### How?

- **Take your time!** Make meals and snacks "events" that take your focus and attention. Enjoy your food. Chew slowly. Really taste it. Rushing through meals and snacks increases the likelihood of overeating.



## Mind Shift



### From here

"I had all this prepared healthy food and I still went for the [chips; cookies; etc.]. I give up."

### To here

"OK. I ate the [cookies; chips; etc.] All is not lost! I understand I may have setbacks from time to time. Now I'll get back on track!"

### How to get there

"All or nothing" thinking is a common pitfall in people trying to manage their weight.

Avoid this discouraging trap by being kind to yourself.

What would you say to someone else if they had a setback? Would you say, "Wow, you really messed up. May as well throw in the towel and forget about eating well"? Or would you say, "That's OK! You're doing well. Everyone has setbacks. Just be mindful and keep trying."

Start treating yourself as kindly as you would treat others!



In our next email, we'll show you how to bring it all together and create fast, easy-to-build meals that will help you in your weight management journey.

And remember, if at any time you have questions about your **CONTRAVE** therapy and would like to speak to a nurse counsellor, call **1-855-CONTRAVE (1-855-268-7283)** from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday to Friday EST.

**CONTRAVE** is a prescription medicine that is used for weight management:

- in patients who have obesity or;
- in patients with overweight and at least one medical condition associated with their weight (such as high blood pressure that is controlled with medicine, Type 2 diabetes, or a high amount of lipids (cholesterol or other types of fat) in the blood).

**CONTRAVE** should be used along with a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity.

**CONTRAVE** should be taken exactly as your Healthcare Professional tells you to.

Please refer to the **Patient Medication Information** insert in your product package for important safety information.

**Contrave** **Support program**

