



## Nutrition Nibbles

### Food for Thought: Health At Every Size

Several years ago I attended a local dietetic association conference and was introduced to a concept that I had never heard of--the Health At Every Size movement. I was quite intrigued. Standing before this room full of dietitians and health professionals was a vivacious, energetic, and extremely healthy obese woman, or as she preferred to call herself, "fat." She challenged all of us to see past her weight and take a better look at what kept her alive and healthy. She ate nutritious foods, enjoyed regular exercise, and took care to keep her blood pressure and cholesterol low: the fact that she weighed more than the ideal had no bearing on her physical or emotional wellbeing. She did all the things that I would recommend any of my clients tackle. This woman was a great example of the idea that weight, in and of itself, is not a tragic crisis if someone takes care of him or herself and has no problematic ailments. She was the prime model of the Health At Every Size concept.

#### What is Health At Every Size

**(HAES)?** HAES focuses on honoring one's body rather than striving towards an ideal weight through dieting. HAES has 3 basic tenets:

- **Size and Self Acceptance:** Bodies come in all shapes and sizes, each equally worthy of respect.

- **Normalized or Intuitive Eating:** Eating should be pleasurable and based on one's hunger, fullness, and appetite.
- **Enjoyable Physical Activity:** Exercise should be pleasant and enhance quality of life. One should find joy in moving.

#### Why is there a need for Health At Every Size?

As many people have personally experienced, yo-yo dieting, willpower, trying funky fads, relying on diet pills and medications, and excessive restricting does not result in long-term weight loss or health. These methods generate quite the opposite response--feelings of failure and hopelessness about while weight climbs. Health at Every Size offers an alternative opportunity to take care of one's self by shifting the motivation from weight to feeling good. HAES encourages letting go of guilt and rigid dieting patterns. HAES challenges individuals to accept that only so much of one's weight is within one's control. HAES advocates that people tackle only those health behaviors that they are willing to maintain long-term. In a sense, the Health At Every Size approach invites people to live life to its fullest.

Is there any research to support

### College Corner: Breakfast is a Mandatory Subject

Your mom was right-- breakfast really is the most important meal of the day! Breakfast helps maintain health, reduce fatigue, and jump-start your metabolism. It breaks the 12-14 hour fast, begins feeding the brain and muscle tissue, and increases your energy level for the next 4-5 hours. Eating breakfast also helps reduce your intake of high fat and high sugar foods later in the day...so eat up! Now do you see why breakfast is mandatory in my book?

Despite the compelling argument for breakfast, many excuses are offered...

- "I'm not hungry when I first wake up." Breakfast does NOT have to happen the second your feet hit the floor. Instead, aim to eat something within an hour of waking.
- "I don't have time for breakfast." Plan ahead. Pick up items at the store that you can easily grab on your way out the door (*see suggestions*)

**Questions or Comments? Email me at  
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## Health At Every Size continued...

**Health At Every Size?** Yes! Every year more research is being conducted and data collected on the HAES concept. Here's a glimpse at a couple of recent studies:

- In 2006, a group of 30-45 year old obese females were split into 2 teams: a HAES team vs. a conventional weight-centered dieting team. Both teams met weekly for 6 months and then monthly for another 6 months. The HAES team was introduced to the 3 basic tenets of the approach while the weight-centered dieting team was educated about calorie counting, exercise for weight loss, and weight tracking. At the end of two years, both teams' progress was reviewed. The HAES volunteers kept their weight stable but were able to lower their blood pressure and cholesterol. In addition, the HAES members had quadrupled their exercise, maintained a wider range of healthy eating habits, were less depressed and more optimistic. In contrast, the conventional dieters regained any weight lost by the end of the two year period, made no improvements in their cholesterol and blood pressure, were unable to maintain as many healthy eating habits, and were

less optimistic. <http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/mar06/health0306.pdf>

- In 2009, a study was published in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, comparing three groups of overweight/obese women—a HAES group, a social support group, and a control group. Both the HAES and the social support groups received 14 weekly sessions led by a dietitian and a psychologist. At the end of the 3-year study period, the groups were compared and the results showed that the HAES group showed greater flexibility (less rigid restriction) around hunger and eating, and were less likely to fall prey to disinhibition (or lack of control surrounding food). Both these results suggest a weight management advantage to those practicing HAES. *J Am Diet Assoc, 2009; 109: 1854-1861.*

Just as my thinking was challenged several years ago, I hope this article on the Health At Every Size concept has encouraged you to rethink your own beliefs about weight, body size, and wellbeing.

College Corner continued...

below).

- "I skip breakfast in order to lose weight." Research shows that people who skip breakfast end up eating more calories later which contributes to weight gain!
- "I don't like any breakfast foods." Contrary to popular belief, breakfast can be any food you like. Try different foods... even last night's leftovers!

### Important Notice:

Coffee, by itself, does not make a complete breakfast. Eat some food...no more excuses allowed!

### No Time for Breakfast?

#### Grab something to go:

- Cereal and milk mixed in a travel mug
- Fruit and yogurt parfait
- Cheese quesadilla
- Last night's leftover pizza
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich
- Fruit is the fastest breakfast!

## March is National Nutrition Month

March is *my* month...National Nutrition Month! This year's theme is "Nutrition from the Ground Up." Why not try one new healthy habit or food this month? Here are a few ideas:

- Choose one new fruit and vegetable at the grocery store each

week during March. By the end of the month, you'll have experienced 8 new foods!

- Walk one extra day each week.
- Go shopping at the farmer's market and support your local farmer.
- Make family mealtime a priority.

The Spring series of **FunFoodle** begins March 30th in Los Gatos and Campbell. Go to [www.funfoodle.com](http://www.funfoodle.com) to sign up!