



Is My Social Network Making Me Healthy or Unhealthy?

Red vine licorice, YES! I used to be a Fleet Farm red licorice girl (I love Fleet Farm) until Mary Crawford introduced me to RED VINE — soft and chewy. As a RD, I shudder when I look at the label. One piece is equal to the carb count in a slice of bread, so not really “free” like people think. Many of my wellness coaching clients think no fat on the label equals “free food.” While I absolutely love red licorice, I save it for a few times a year now when I go out of town.

As I write this note to you, we are off to Mark and Pam’s cabin in Rhineland, Wisconsin, for the annual family weekend. Years of nutrition coaching have demonstrated that people equate cabins with junk food and a “birthday party” mentality. “I can eat it all. This is cabin weekend.” It’s like celebrating your birthday with your 3 fav food groups — sugar, alcohol and fat.

Why do healthy habits instantly disappear during cabin weekends, parties or get-togethers?

There are 3 key factors which research has shown contribute to people eating differently when they are with others than alone. I have come up with a few questions to ask yourself which potentially could save you hundreds of calories. Remember, the number one “tool” that can change your life is a question. So, start ASKING!!

Foods that are available

The foods available are higher in calories and fat. (Yes, our moms taught us “food is love” but why does it have to be laden with fat?)

Ask yourself: “What can I do to prepare pre-party?” I often eat a slice of high fiber bread with peanut butter and a small glass of milk — about 150 calories. A cold hard old roll looks pretty good on an empty stomach and often is much more than 150 calories.

Ask yourself: “How can I create time to eat a healthy high fiber snack before I leave for the party?” I teach clients that our environment is stronger than our will. So create your own healthy environment.

Ask yourself: “Can I offer to bring a healthy side dish?”

Time

Many people think, “I will be happy if I go to happy hour.” Well, happy hour after work can easily provide 700 calories. I calculated 4 chicken wings at 400 calories and 2 real beers at 300 calories. (Drink lite beer and save 150 calories)

Ask yourself: "Is my goal to 'get fat around my waistline,' unwind with alcohol, or socialize? What is my intention for this happy hour?"

Ask yourself: "What activity do I do with my friends? Is it all about food, physical activity or sitting around? What time of day is the healthiest time for me to meet my friends?" If you want to meet for dinner it is often easier to eat later as there is less traffic and less people and time for a walk/talk before your dinner or fitting in some exercise after work.

Mood

Good mood, you eat! Bad mood, you eat! Your mood influences what you eat.

Ask yourself: "Does eating really relieve my stress?" It may temporarily until you want more to eat. If you understand how your thoughts become paired with your eating and eventually your hips you may eat less, weigh less and be happier, hey.

Ask yourself: "Am I hungry?" If not, have a plan like my wellness coaching client Jim who drinks a can of V-8 juice when he is not hungry and is "just kinda looking around" the old kitchen.

Ask yourself: "What can I do besides eat when I get stressed out?" Try a 1- minute phone call and make someone's day instead of focusing on what is stressing out your day. I love leaving singing birthday phone calls. Try this and you will forget your woes!

People sway your eating habits. You, knowingly or unknowingly, are letting it happen. Your habits today create your body tomorrow. It's as simple as that! So think about it, are you going to LIKE your body tomorrow based on what you ATE today? I am joyfully here to help!

With gratitude that YOU were born! Love, Chere

P.S. We never opened the Red Vine Licorice but did manage to eat a few of Aunt Pam's and Gram's bars and picked lots of wild blueberries.