

Webinar 3 Handout:

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT CAN HARM EATING

To live a completely Nutritious Life both physically and mentally, you need a nutritious environment. Not just in the refrigerator, but in your closet, around your home, at your desk and even in your car. Think big picture - we're talking everything from eating to organization to cleaning to "going green." Taking control of your **whole** environment reinforces a healthy lifestyle and has the power to enable you to eat well, manage stress and stay hydrated. At Nutritious Life, this all falls under the Live Consciously (Your World) pillar. There are some aspects of our environment that we can't always control – like the traffic or the construction down the street. But there are plenty of factors within our reach that can make a big difference in our lifestyle and mood. For example, making a clutter-free zone in your office and turning off the TV when you aren't really watching not only eliminates chaos, but decreases stress and anxiety, improves your sleep, and can ultimately help with weight loss - it's all tied together. Leonardo Da Vinci said "simplicity is the ultimate sophistication" and he was right. By encouraging clients to remove the hazards (I'm talking actual dangerous chemicals as well as clutter and triggers to overeating) in their environments, they'll be one step closer to staying in control, calm, healthy and happy. Here's where and how to guide them.

At the Grocery Store

This one's a no brainer. You can't eat healthfully if you don't stock your kitchen with the right foods. Focus on fresh and organic (when possible) when you're in the supermarket and be aware of how all of your choices affect your body and the environment around you.

- **Buy organic foods when possible.** Organic produce is free of most pesticides, is far better for the environment, and may even be more nutritious than conventional food, especially when it comes to antioxidant content. If you're on a budget, stick with the *Environmental Working Group's* Dirty Dozen and Clean Fifteen as guidelines for what to buy organic. Though not a perfect science, the lists rank produce from highest to lowest pesticide residue and give a general idea of where to make buying organic a priority.
- **Treat yourself to grass-fed organic beef.** With grass-fed you get fewer calories, less saturated fat and more omega-3 fats and antioxidants like vitamins A and E than in grain-fed beef. With organic you'll be avoiding exposure to toxins like antibiotics and growth hormones that are often found in non-organic meat. For the best of both worlds choose beef with both labels.

- **Go wild with fish.** Wild fish are just that - wild - which means they eat a natural diet and won't be given antibiotics or other unnatural treatments. Farmed fish often eat a diet high in GMO corn and soy and can be treated with antibiotics and dyes - nothing natural about that. Studies have shown that farmed salmon are more likely to contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), a pollutant linked to cancer. In addition to concerns of a GMO-diet, in 2015 FDA made preliminary approvals of a GMO farmed salmon called AquAdvantage Salmon, engineered to grow faster. It's been a slow process getting the GMO salmon to market, but it could very well be a reality in the future. Shop from a trusted fishmonger who can tell you where the fish came from.
- **Monitor your packaged foods.** Most people are well-aware of the nutrition facts panel that tells things like calories in food, but that's only half the story. The ingredients list completes the picture and says a ton about what you're eating. Eating food before reading the ingredient list is like buying a house without going inside first. The ingredients list is the best indicator of whether or not the product is actually good for you. Most packaged foods tend to be laden with chemical preservatives and artificial coloring and ingredients. Common food chemicals like MSG and high fructose corn syrup have been linked directly to obesity. Other additives to watch out for include artificial sweeteners, butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA) and butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT), partially hydrogenated oils, sodium nitrate and nitrite, and soy protein isolate. BPA is another harmful substance not used directly in food but in the packaging it comes in like cans and plastic. Research shows a direct link between BPA and obesity. Check labels to ensure packaged and canned goods are "BPA-free."

Two important notes:

1. *Buy fresh whenever you can. Not only are you avoiding chemical additives, but fresh foods usually come in nature's packaging (or at least a lot less packaging than individually wrapped snacks in a bag in a box in a bag...)*
2. *BPA-free doesn't always mean safe, because substitutes like BPF and BPS aren't harmless either. Similar in structure to BPA, studies are revealing BPA substitutes may also be bad news for the reproductive system, brain, heart and thyroid and can mess with the way genes are expressed. Though research suggests the effects aren't as bad as those of BPA, these compounds aren't as abundant in our environment so results might be skewed. Glass is always your best bet for food packaging, and always rinse canned foods like beans before eating.*

- **Remember reusable bags.** Think about how often you go to the store and how many bags you get each trip - that can really add up. The U.S. goes through 100 billion single-use plastic bags every year. When plastics break down, they don't biodegrade; they photodegrade, which means they break down to smaller fragments that soak up toxins and contaminate soil, waterways, and animals. Investing (we're talking pennies, or even free) in reusable bags and remembering to bring them to the store cuts down on pollution in the environment and in your home (do you really need that stock of plastic bags stuffed under the sink?) Keep reusable bags in your car, in your purse, or in your gym bag so you will have them at hand whether you need to grab a few items or do a full shopping run. These days, many stores charge extra if you don't bring your own bags. In some areas, plastic bags are even outlawed.

In the Refrigerator

Give that fridge a makeover. Declutter your fridge by getting rid of unhealthy foods and stock your kitchen with easy-to-eat healthy foods so you'll be more likely to make smart choices when it comes to mealtime.

- **Out with the old.** Goodbye crusty condiment jars! Discard anything that you haven't used recently, is past the sell-by date, or that you think might tempt you to make a poor choice. Do you really need eight kinds of salad dressing? Same goes for the pantry - how long has that boxed mac and cheese been there anyway? It may feel like food waste, but there are plenty of foods that will do more harm in your body than in the trash.
- **Spotlight the new.** Once you clean out the old, you can stock up with the fresh and new. Rearrange shelves so the first foods you see are the healthiest. You'll be more likely to grab them in a rush and won't need a map to your fridge to find a healthy snack. I like to have a glass carafe of water with lemon and a container of pre-cut veggies in water on the main shelf and on the lower shelves I keep tubs of Greek yogurt. I'm also careful to keep the crisper drawers filled with fresh produce and if that cucumber starts to look limp, I know it's time to make a salad or green juice. Stocking your kitchen with foods you're excited to nourish your body with will help you become a more empowered eater.
- **Step up the prep.** Use the weekends to get ready for a busy week ahead. Pre-chop veggies for quick salads and stirfrys, hard boil eggs, grill chicken breasts, or make a big pot of soup for an easy weeknight dinner - all in the comfort of your Sunday loungewear. That way when you get home from a late night at work you can have dinner on the table faster than you can even dial for takeout. Keep prepped foods in organized glass containers so you know what

you have on hand during the week. Glass is not only safe and BPA- and BPA-alternative-free but lets you easily see what's in each container so you know exactly what's on hand.

In the Kitchen

It's not just *what* foods you eat that affects your health but also *how much* and there are tons of factors subconsciously affecting what goes onto your plate and into your body. Design a smarter kitchen and be empowered to eat what's right and safe for you.

- **Downsize your dishware.** Research shows that people are likely to eat what's in front of them and there is a basic tendency to use the size of plates, bowls and cups as an indication of how much to serve and eat. The best way to control how much goes on your plate is by using a smaller plate (about 9 inches in diameter). Same goes for cups. Purchase 8 ounce beverage glasses and 6 ounce coffee and juice cups to keep portions in check. Smaller dishware also helps prevent the size-contrast illusion. A 4 ounce serving of meat looks a whole lot smaller on a 12 inch plate than it does on a 9 inch plate.
- **Turn up the lights.** People are more likely to overeat in dim light (why do you think restaurants are always so dim? Hint, it's *not* so you can't read the menu!) Dimmed or soft lighting tends to increase both the amount of time spent eating and the level of comfort and disinhibition at the meal (meaning people are less aware of how much they are eating.) Soft, warm lighting - including candlelight - generally encourages people to linger over their food, enjoy an unplanned dessert or have an extra drink, especially when eating with others. Save the mood lighting for Valentine's Day and keep your kitchen well lit while you eat.
- **Turn off the TV and turn on the music.** Music may actually help curb stress-related eating; it can fill an inner need that may lead to overeating. One study even showed that soft music in a fast food restaurant caused customers to slow down and enjoy their dining experience; they ended up eating less than people who ate without the music. However, studies have shown that watching television leads to mindless overeating (just think about how quickly a bucket of popcorn can disappear.) TV watching distracts you from the food and from listening to your HQ, causing you to eat beyond slight satisfaction. Television can also be a trigger to eating when you're not even hungry. Focus on your food and HQ, not on the tube.

- **Filter your water.** In the United States we're lucky to have a continuous supply of drinking water, but that doesn't mean our system is perfect. More than 20 percent of the country's water-treatment plants have violated water safety laws, piping water that contains arsenic, radioactive traces of uranium and even raw sewage into people's homes, and about 7 million Americans are sickened by contaminated tap water every year. Unfortunately, bottled water isn't a good answer: it's expensive, bad for the environment, and there are no guarantees that it's any safer than tap water. The best fix? A home water filter - either in a reusable pitcher or on your faucet. Read up on your local water quality and come up with a plan that will safely keep you hydrated.
- **Cut down on plastic.** BPA is a common term by now. There are concerns that this chemical, which is often found in plastic, mimics estrogen in the body and can be extremely harmful to children and fetuses. There is also growing evidence that it's connected to the rise in obesity and diabetes rates. But research shows chemicals that replace BPA release the same estrogen-like chemicals (see note above). It's a safe idea to switch over to glass containers whenever possible and limit the amount of plastic containers you use for food and drink. Most importantly, never, ever microwave or heat food in plastic.

In the Bedroom

Skimping on sleep causes your whole body to be out of whack and ultimately affects your food choices throughout the day. When you don't get the eight hours of nightly sleep you need, your levels of leptin, the hormone that tells the brain when you're full, drop, and your levels of ghrelin, an appetite-stimulating hormone, rise, causing you to overeat and make unhealthy food choices. Sleep deprivation also alters the hormones insulin and glucagon, which regulate glucose metabolism. Over time, this can lead to insulin resistance and weight gain. Studies show lack of sleep can also lead to an increase in cortisol (the stress hormone) and trigger cellular pathways that cause inflammation. Plus, sleep deprivation can wreak havoc in your brain, making it harder to think clearly and leading to emotional swings. One study found losing as little as 30 minutes of sleep per day can cause you to gain weight. Those who don't get the 7-8 recommended hours of sleep every night are 23% more likely to be obese. Here's what you can do to ensure you get a good night's rest.

- **Practice clean sleeping.** This means banishing all electronics from the bedroom. Yes, you *can* sleep through the night without checking your iPhone and you *don't* need the TV to fall asleep. Experts say that the artificial light from electronic devices messes with your natural sleep rhythm because the body equates light to daytime. As a result, you make less of the hormone melatonin which helps regulate sleep, making it more difficult to sleep when light

is around. Shut everything down about 30 minutes before you go to bed - you have a DVR for a reason. And trust me, your Instagram feed can wait until morning--no scrolling in bed!

- **Set a bedtime.** You may have protested bedtime when you were 8 years old, but it's time to finally listen to your mother. Try to go to bed at the same time each evening and wake up at the same time each morning, even on the weekends. Sleeping in only makes it more difficult to maintain your bedtime discipline. Research shows that consistent sleep routines help to maintain your circadian rhythms and sleep best. Plus, sleep loss is accumulative and skimping on hours during the week builds up your sleep debt. Too much sleep debt is linked to gaining weight.
- **Unwind before bed.** Taking time to relax before hitting the hay makes the transition from awake to sleep almost effortless. Practice mindful meditation with eight-count breathing, pamper yourself with a cup of herbal tea or hand cream, and keep a comfortable temperature in the bedroom to get yawning in no time.

In Your Closet

Studies show that too many things crowding and competing for our visual attention can simply slow down your ability to process *anything*. Clutter is a cause of genuine stress and anxiety - not things you need when you're trying to get your day started and get out the door. Cleaning out and reorganizing your closet will help you to start each day on a positive note which can improve your mood and choices throughout the day.

- **Clear out the old.** Getting dressed shouldn't be an act of aggravation; it should be easy. Take items that you haven't worn in ages to a charity to free up space while helping out those who really need the clothes.
- **Divvy up your closet.** It may sound simple, but dividing your closet into weekend and work clothes, separating clothes by season, and buying a shoe bag can all cut down on frantic rummaging around in the mornings. No more MIA sweaters or long lost left shoes.
- **Store your stuff elsewhere.** Do you have a teeny tiny closet like many city dwellers do? There's no need to cram everything you own in at once. Things like scarves, parkas, sun hats and bathing suits don't need to be accessible all year round. Make what you need available and store what you don't need somewhere else (like in a container under the bed or in the attic crawlspace).

At Your Desk

Who can get work done in a messy environment? As I said above, clutter causes stress and can slow down brain function. Some reports also say that workers can lose nearly an hour and a half *per day* at work just trying to rifle through papers and desk clutter. An organized desk and other healthy office habits will promote a stress-free work environment and can improve both your mood and productivity at the office.

- **Unchain yourself.** You know the expression “chained to your desk” - well it’s time to find the key! Stand up as much as possible at work. You burn 33% more calories standing up than you do sitting down. Plus, sitting for long periods is linked to increased weight, greater risk of disease, and shorter life expectancy. For example, decide to stand whenever you take a phone call during the day. Instead of emailing a co-worker who sits down the hall, take a minute to walk over and deliver the message. Don’t think you’re off the hook if you exercise. Research shows even a solid workout session won’t offset the bad effects of sitting all day. Try to get up at least once every hour during the day - it’ll keep you energized and more alert.
- **Declutter your desktop.** It’s five minutes until conference time and you can’t find the document you need. Who needs that kind of stress? Organize your desktop (both physical and virtual) and get rid of anything that isn’t essential. Go through each paper and either trash it or organize it into a simple filing system. Use folders, labels, and thumbtacks to keep important documents organized and easy to find. You can also declutter by clearing “office gear” like paper clips and staplers off your desktop and making room for them in a drawer. Next, tackle the computer desktop. Organize documents into folders so you know where to find them. Find a method that works for you to avoid the heart-pumping stress that comes with searching for important papers or docs.. Most importantly, *maintain* your organization system and whenever you sense clutter, take a few minutes to get reorganized and prevent a buildup.
- **Liven it up.** Keep an item or two on your desk that you know will make you smile throughout the day. Maybe it’s a framed photo of your family or a calendar of cute puppies - whatever works for you. But limit it to one or two items to get a smile without the clutter. A happy background on your computer can help boost your mood too.

- **Practice aromatherapy.** Soothing smells of essential oils from flowers, herbs and other plants have been shown to help relieve stress and anxiety and increase both alertness and mood. In one study, the smell of lavender even helped participants to solve math problems faster and more accurately. Stock your office with a lavender soy candle, aromatherapy diffuser, or oil wick to keep you relaxed and productive throughout the day.
- **Keep it zen.** Find something to keep in your office that says Zen to you - you can look to that item whenever you feel a hint of stress coming on. Maybe it's a small plant, stone, or even portable fountain if your office is big enough. Keeping a sense of calm at the workplace will keep you happy, relaxed, and stress-free throughout the busy work week.

On Your Body

By now you're paying close attention to what goes *into* your body, but you also have to be aware of what goes *onto* it. Many commercial beauty products are filled with chemicals that can ultimately be harmful to your skin, hair and overall health.

- **Read labels.** In the same way I encourage clients to read labels on food products, I'd like you to start being just as fussy about skin care products. When I'm buying moisturizers and cleansers, I look for products that are free of parabens, formaldehyde, phthalates, petroleum jelly, PEG, and FD&C colors. If you're unsure about an ingredient, look it up on the Environmental Working Group's Cosmetics Database.
- **Go au natural.** Less is more when it comes to ingredients labels. Buy natural products with short lists of ingredients. Sometimes, you don't even need a special product. Olive oil, avocados and other foods that are rich in monounsaturated fats can be used as a moisturizer for hair, nails, and skin, and you can make your own facial scrubs from simple ingredients in your kitchen - try mixing pumpkin, milk, and honey for a moisturizing face mask.

Under the Sink

Cleaners are meant to do just that - clean. When it comes to everyday use, choose cleaning products that are free of toxic ingredients and volatile fumes to keep your home and body safe.

- **Make your own cleaning solutions.** Your kitchen cabinets are filled with products that can double as household cleaners. They are safer to use because they don't contain harmful chemicals, and it's usually less expensive to make your own rather than buy specialty cleaners. Some of my go-tos are:
 - White vinegar mixed with a little water on floors, windows, shower doors, toilets, and drains
 - Lemon juice to remove grease without chemicals or as a bleaching agent on clothing
 - Baking soda in the fridge to absorb odors or mixed with water to clean grout between bathroom tiles, sterling silver, and stains on china and clothing
 - Olive oil with vinegar or lemon juice to return shine to wood
- Clean as you go. Tackling a mountain of dishes or dust at once can feel overwhelming. Once you have your cleaning gear in order, make sure you use it regularly! For most people, it's easier to fit in short cleaning sessions than devoting an entire day to scrubbing down.

By taking these efforts to clean up your environment you'll be on your way to an all around healthier lifestyle. It's not just about taking out hazardous chemicals and toxins. Getting rid of the clutter and chaos in your environment will help to decrease stress, lower anxiety, and improve sleep - all factors that tie in to hunger, food choices, and weight management. From your kitchen to your closet to your home and office, make your environment one that will empower you to make healthy choices throughout the day and keep you on the path of living a Nutritious Life.