

## Dealing With Bad Influences on Your Diet

By *Amanda Pendolino*

It would be much easier to maintain a healthy diet if there were no restaurants, no buffets, no free hors d'oeuvres, no skinny friends who love french fries. But it's the real world, and you can't sit in your house counting calories every day for the rest of your life. A lot of people fail at losing weight simply because it's so easy to say yes to bad



influences.

It's not enough to have healthy food in your house and to know a lot about fiber, whole grains, protein and all that stuff. You need to have a plan to deal with all the food situations that are out of your control. Here are my tips for dealing with all the bad influences on your diet:

**1. Don't fall into the "all or nothing" mentality.** It's easy to think, "I'm having ice cream, so I might as well have a large and pile on the M&Ms." Resist! There ARE healthy options everywhere. There is always the option to have a small portion. Skip the candy, or the whipped cream, or

something.

**2. Eating at a restaurant is NOT a special occasion.** It's also easy to consider going out to eat as a special occasion, and as a result, indulge in things you normally wouldn't. Instead, think of going out to eat as every other day. It's not that you have to order a salad without dressing and feel resentful...but you can choose chicken over beef, you can choose a salad over fries and you can choose to skip dessert or appetizers. You can have one glass of wine instead of three martinis. There ARE ways to be healthy when you're out.

**3. Don't compare yourself to others.** There are plenty of skinny people who eat unhealthy foods. It sucks, but it's a fact of life – and it has nothing to do with you. You don't have to make the choices that other people make. Everyone is different, and you know what you have to do to stick to your diet. Remind yourself that the skinny girl eating the giant ice cream sundae might not have eaten anything else today. She might also have high cholesterol...or be bulimic. You don't know!

**4. Be prepared for saboteurs.** This is a little cheesy, but sometimes it helps to have a mantra. When you're tempted to make a poor decision, remind yourself why you're trying to lose weight. You might say to yourself, *I want to fit in those jeans again.* My friends laugh when I repeat the mantra, *I will not be sabotaged,* but it keeps me on track. Don't give in when people urge you to order fries or extra drinks.

**5. Think about whether you're really hungry.** It sounds obvious, but a lot of bad influences come around when we're not even hungry. Just because you're at an event with free food doesn't mean that you have to eat it. If it fits in your day's diet, go ahead. Free food is endlessly tempting, but I would rather be thin and have spent a couple extra bucks on healthy food when I was actually hungry!