The Kitchen Is Closed – 14 Day Challenge

Your meals may be on track with rounded options including proteins, vegetables, fruits, whole grains, rotated through a perfectly planned schedule each week. Or that could still be a work in progress. Either way, small changes in not only what we eat but also when we eat can have a big impact on our overall health, wellness, and ultimately, our waistline too!

How After Dinner Snacking Affects Your Health

Often, late-night go-to foods include those that are heavy and rich, and drinks may be carbonated, caffeinated or alcoholic. Limiting our intake of foods and beverages as such can help to promote good sleep hygiene, allowing you to fall asleep when you lay down and not be awoken by indigestion (Sleep Foundation: http://bit.ly/2BNaXa).

Snacking late at night can be related to boredom or improper eating habits with a craving or an insulin crash as a result. Stress also induces hunger due to the release of cortisol, which is a hormone responsible for managing your blood sugar, metabolism regulation, and reducing inflammation. Find ways to relieve stress and keep your mind active and focus on building a balanced meal to help reduce the urge to snack after dinner. (Huffington Post: http://bit.ly/2sopRcD).

Research has found that snacking can lead to a disruption of physiology, specifically in the hippocampus where long-term memory is stored, thus affecting our ability to learn (Huffington Post: http://bit.ly/2EbbWYC).

If giving up snacking completely sounds like an impossible task, the Harvard Healthy Sleep Center recommends you at least finish your dinner meal several hours before going to bed, and make sure that the foods you choose are healthy and won’t affect your digestion (Harvard: http://bit.ly/2nJq3yk).

Participate in the Challenge

If after dinner snacking is a regular activity in your house – consider closing the kitchen area once dinner is complete for this 2-week challenge! Simply shade in or color the shape for each night you avoided eating or drinking anything (other than water) after you finished your dinner. Help yourself out and truly turn off the lights and avoid the kitchen after dinner – you can do it! Let’s see if in just 14 days you can kick (or at least change) this habit for good!

To earn 10 points for this challenge, please submit your tracking form to wellness@uc.edu. All points are added to your portal for you the first week of the following month.

Want to learn more about your own dietary habits and goals? Take advantage of the “Talk to a Dietitian” feature on the new portal, powered by Alyfe Wellbeing Strategies. Login at: http://bewelluc.alyfewellbeing.com

Eat Well Questions? Please contact wellness@uc.edu