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**Am I Hungry? E-Newsletter**  
**April 2007**



Go to <http://www.amihungry.com/pdf/newsletter-04-07.pdf> for a formatted PDF version of this newsletter.

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## **DON'T EAT AFTER 7 AND SIX OTHER WEIGHT MANAGEMENT MYTHS**

By Michelle May, M.D.

Diets are filled with dogma about when, what and how much to eat. Certainly “the rules” are usually based on observations that make sense, but unless you understand why you do certain things, you’ll break the rules as soon as the temptation is greater than your motivation. Let’s examine some of these myths, where they come from and how to make long term changes that will work for you.

### **Myth: Don’t Eat After 7pm**

Your metabolism doesn’t shut off at 7:01 pm so why is this rule so common? It is based on the observation that a lot of people who struggle with their weight overeat in the evening. Most people have already eaten dinner so they aren’t snacking because they’re hungry. They snack because of boredom, television, loneliness and other triggers.

Rather than creating a rule to address those habits, ask yourself “Am I hungry?” whenever you feel like eating in the evenings. If you truly are, eat, keeping in mind that your day is winding down so you won’t need a huge meal. If you aren’t, consider why you feel like eating and come up with a better way to address that need. Ken, a man in one of my workshops, realized he was just bored so he started doing stained glass in the evenings to entertain himself. Whatever works!

### **Myth: Eat Small Meals Every 3 Hours**

This rule is based on the fact that many thin people tend to eat frequent small meals. However, most of the thin people I know don’t check their watch to tell them it’s time to eat – they eat when their body tells them to. They eat when they’re hungry and stop when they’re satisfied. Since that tends to be a small meal, they get hungry again in a few hours.



Instead of watching the clock, begin to tune in to the physical symptoms of hunger to tell you when to eat. And remember, your stomach is only about the size of your fist so it only holds a handful of food comfortably. By learning to

listen to your body's signals, you are likely to follow a frequent small meal pattern naturally.

### **Myth: Don't Let Yourself Get Hungry**

This one is based on the belief that overweight people are incapable of controlling themselves when they are hungry. In my experience with hundreds of workshop participants, once they learn to tell the difference between physical hunger and head hunger, the opposite is true.

Think about it. When you're hungry, food tastes better and is more satisfying. My grandmother used to say, "Hunger is the best seasoning." Besides, if you aren't hungry when you start eating, what's going to tell you to stop? Of course, you also need to learn to recognize hunger and make time to eat before you are *too* hungry since it's harder to make great choices when you are starving!

### **Myth: Exercise More When You Cheat**

I HATE this one because it has caused millions of people to equate physical activity with punishment for eating. As a result, many people either hate to exercise or use exercise to earn the right to eat.

While it's true that your weight is determined by your overall calories in versus your calories out, exercise is only part of the equation and has so many other important benefits. Instead of using exercise to pay penance, focus on how great you feel, how much more energy you have, how much better you sleep and how much healthier you are becoming. In the long run, you are more likely to do something because it feels good than because you are forced to.

### **Myth: Follow Your Diet Six Days a Week Then You Can Have a Cheat Day**

This is absurd! What if you were a harsh, overly strict parent six days a week then completely ignored your kids every Saturday? How would this approach work for your marriage or managing your employees?

It just doesn't make sense to try to be perfect (whatever *that* is) Sunday through Friday while obsessing about everything you're going to eat on your day off. Then on Saturday you overeat just because you're allowed to so you end up feeling miserable all day. Huh? Personally, I would rather enjoy eating the foods I love every day mindfully and in moderation. I call this being "in charge" instead of going back and forth between being in control and out of control.

### **Myth: Eat X Number of Calories (or X Number of Points) Every Day**

Does it make sense that you would need exactly the same amount of fuel every day? Aren't there just days when you are hungrier than others, maybe because of your activity levels or hormonal cycles?

Rather than setting yourself up to “cheat” on those hungry days and forcing yourself to eat more food than you want on your less hungry days, allow yourself the flexibility to adjust your intake based on your actual needs rather than an arbitrary number. Important: for this to work long term, you also need to learn to tell the difference between physical hunger and head hunger.

### **Myth: Carbs are Bad (or Fat is Bad)**

This “good food-bad food” thinking makes certain foods special. As a result, you may feel deprived and think about them even more than you did before. Worse yet, healthy foods become a four-letter word.



The truth is all foods fit into a healthy diet. Since different foods have various nutritional qualities and calorie content, you can use the principles of balance, variety and moderation to guide you without trying to restrict an entire food group.

### **Truth: You Are In Charge**

I assume the rule-makers are well-intentioned and don't realize that they've created a tight rope that most people will fall off of sooner or later. If your head hadn't already told you that all these rules are crazy, wasn't your heart saying there had to be a better way?

It's time to give yourself a wider path that you can stay on forever. Allow yourself the flexibility to make any decision as long as you consider the advantages and disadvantages of your choices and always keep self-care in mind.

If you are in the Phoenix area, join me for an 8-week Am I Hungry?® Workshop beginning Monday, April 9<sup>th</sup> and I'll show you how. Register or find a licensed Am I Hungry? Facilitator near you: <http://amihungry.com/weight-management-programs.shtml>.

Wishing you optimal health and joy!  
Michelle May, M.D.

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## **AM I HUNGRY? SPREADS NATIONWIDE AND OVERSEAS**

“This non-diet approach resonates with individuals and health care professionals alike. The grass roots spread of Am I Hungry? has been nothing short of amazing,” Dr. May said. Am I Hungry? paperback and DVD sales have continued to climb as people discover a permanent solution to their food and weight issues <http://www.amihungry.com/book.shtml>.

There are also fourteen more Am I Hungry?® Licensed Facilitators <http://www.amihungry.com/health-professionals.shtml> from Alaska to Florida and California to Massachusetts. There are weight management programs throughout Arizona: Ahwatukee, Casa Grande, Chandler, Flagstaff, Glendale, Gilbert, Goodyear, Mesa, Phoenix, Scottsdale and Sedona. We also have Facilitators in Anchorage, Alaska; Soldotna, Alaska; Blythe, California; Magalia, California; Smyrna Beach, Florida; Greenfield, Indiana; Bowdoinham, Maine; Annapolis, Maryland; Stoughton, Massachusetts; Highland Park, New Jersey; Columbus, Ohio; Tipp City, Ohio; Madras, Oregon; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Salt Lake City, Utah. New workshops are starting all the time; search for one near you: <http://www.amihungry.net/>.

Dr. May said, "There are still many areas that don't have access to workshops yet so we'll continue to train facilitators (<http://www.amihungry.com/health-professionals.shtml>) who want to make a real difference. We'll also offer more Am I Hungry? Tele-Workshops <http://www.amihungry.com/weight-management-programs.shtml> and one on one coaching so people everywhere can learn the skills they need to change their life!"

No Facilitator in your area yet? Order your own **Stop Dieting, Start Living DVD Set and Workbook** and discover freedom from dieting and overeating. Dr. May facilitates these eight live, interactive, entertaining workshops with real participants. Learn more: <http://www.amihungry.com/weight-loss-DVDs.shtml>.

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## HEALTH AND FITNESS PROFESSIONALS: WANT TO LEARN MORE?

If you're passionate about helping people make revolutionary lifestyle changes, learn more about the non-diet approach and see how the Am I Hungry? Weight Management program works.

Simply request a complimentary Workshop Overview CD and DVD explaining this rational, innovative approach to weight management: <http://www.profcs.com/app/netcart.asp?MerchantID=59012&ProductID=3320078>.

(Please note: Am I Hungry?® is a registered trademark and cannot be used in conjunction with your workshops unless you are trained and licensed by Am I Hungry?® If you are already utilizing our materials with your clients, please join us to learn the most effective techniques and access the best tools for helping them become healthier and happier! <http://www.amihungry.com/health-professionals.shtml>)

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## PAY IT FORWARD!

If you've ever read anything in this Am I Hungry? E-newsletter that inspired or intrigued you, please pass it on! They'll get a bonus copy of "101 Things to Do Besides Eat" to hang on their refrigerator when they order their own complimentary subscription at: <http://www.amihungry.com/enews.shtml>.

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