

PCOS NEWS

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Where's Sheila?

For those of you who don't know (or haven't seen Sheila lately), she will be taking a leave of absence starting in September 2002 for maternity. She hopes, after the first few weeks, to be able to attend most of your 6 and 12 month visits. If any issues arise that you would like her to address, she can be easily contacted by Vanessa, or the rest of the PCOS team during her leave. She expects to be back at work full-time in the early part of 2003. We thank you for your patience and understanding during this time, but hope any inconveniences to you, as study participants, will be minimal. We thank you also for your ongoing participation in the PCOS Diet & Exercise Study. Each one of you is important to us!



Going Away?

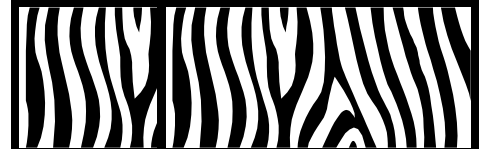


Have fun and relax, but let us know before you leave, so we can book your apt's accordingly.

WORDS TO LIVE BY

"Life is not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be experienced".

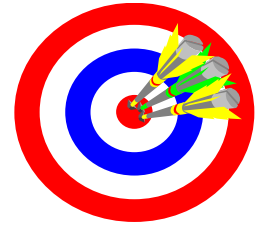
- Kierkegaard



Motivation:

The division between what we want and what we do...

SHEILA LAREDO, MD



First, a word of thanks to the study participant who recently suggested this topic as a way of addressing some of the issues that impede positive changes in lifestyle. As always, we welcome input and suggestions from all study participants to help improve the newsletters. By the time you have been in the study a few months, you probably have a very good understanding of the principles needed to make changes in your diet, or diet and exercise routines. However, many people have difficulty translating that knowledge into action. The link between these two is often motivation. In my search for information about motivation, I came upon a website that was helpful - <http://www.mentalhelp.net>. Some of the information provided in this article is derived from this site.

Setting Goals It is important to be aware of the type of goal that you set as well as the goal itself. Research literature tells us that **goals that are aimed at improving your own skills** or at helping others (e.g. I want to learn to cook a healthy meal for my family) are more likely to be achieved than goals which aim to increase one's power or to compete with others (I want to cook a meal that people will like more than they liked so-and-so's). In this case, the goal of learning to cook is the same, but the framing of the goal is very different.

Small and large goals - large goals are more easily achieved when they are in line with your values, and are **positive, rather than negative**. "I want to feel healthier" is a better goal than "I don't want to feel so tired". Large goals are also more easily achieved and less overwhelming when they are broken up into smaller bits. Promising yourself to eat one extra serving of vegetables each day next week is easier to achieve than expecting to lose a large amount of weight right away. This is very important because success breeds success. The more experience you have with achieving your goals, the better you get at achievement. Take time to take pleasure in your small successes.

Focusing on important goals - many of us spend a great deal of time focusing on "urgent" goals (typically, things with deadlines), although often these goals don't align with our long-term goals. It is important to spend time on goals that matter to you - even if there is no due date for them!

SUBCONSCIOUS MOTIVATORS: Sometimes we think we are motivated to achieve a particular goal, but in fact are highly motivated not to achieve that goal. Why? This is individual, but often may result from fears of the consequences of success. For example, success at school may mean that a student will be expected to continue to succeed and to be independent, whereas in fact, that student is most motivated by not having to look after himself or herself, and so sets himself up to do poorly at school. If you think this kind of motivational issue may apply to you, double-check the excuses you make to yourself for not accomplishing a particular goal.

CONFIDENCE IN YOUR OWN ABILITIES: There is a lot of research on the effect that belief in your abilities has on your actual ability. I found one study (McAuley et al, Health Psychology 1999) in which young women performed exercise, and were then provided with bogus feedback on how they had performed compared to "norms". Women who were told they had performed better than the "norms", felt much better than those who were told they'd performed worse than the "norms" (regardless of how they had actually performed). This suggests that how we feel about our accomplishments can be changed, and may impact on the accomplishments as well.

OPERANT CONDITIONING (HUH??): For some people, tackling a difficult task is reward enough in itself. For those people, the task itself, or the feeling of success alone is intrinsically rewarding or reinforcing. For many others, the fear of failure (or any of many other concerns) can prevent an attempt at success. If you think this is you, you may want to consider extrinsic reinforcement or rewards. In other words, set up a reward system in advance for achieving small milestones. For example, you may choose to give yourself a treat (perhaps a night out with friends, a manicure, a warm bath or something else you really enjoy but don't do enough), for every goal you achieve (such as one week with one extra fruit, or one month with no pop). The general rule is - give yourself a small reward for a small goal, and a big one for a large goal, and don't put off the reward. If you think this sounds silly, there is a huge research literature on teaching skills to humans and animals using these principles!

In summary, to succeed at anything, you need to have the skills to do it, and the motivation to carry it out. At the PCOS Diet & Exercise Study, we provide you with the skills to make lifestyle changes via your regular appointments with Christine and Vanessa. Motivation is something that comes from within - we hope that these few pointers will make it easier for you:

- 1) Be aware of the reasons that making lifestyle changes are important to you and use these to motivate yourself.
- 2) Set goals: small, specific, achievable, positive, aimed at improving yourself.
- 3) Give priority to your good health over other things that may seem important in the short-term, but are not important in the long-term.
- 4) Be prepared for occasional setbacks - they are normal. However, if setbacks are the rule rather than the exception, ask yourself if there is a pattern and if there are "subconscious motivators".
- 5) Have faith in your ability to succeed, and set your early goals modestly enough that they can be achieved. Practice success - it gets easier the more you do it.
- 6) Reward yourself for a job well done!

Are Coffee Drinks Derailing Your Diet?

Vanessa R. Speers, M.Sc.

Are you cooling off with frozen coffee drinks? It's the all-inclusive summer vacation in a cup... complete with eye-opening caffeine, refreshing ice, and a rich, creamy taste. Frozen coffee drinks may be convenient and satisfying, but they are also packed with calories and fat.

Putting It In Perspective

Before stopping for a frozen cup-of-joe, consider how many calories and fat grams are lurking under the lid. Good old-fashioned brewed coffee is calorie and fat free, but most frozen coffee drinks are prepared with syrups and cream. A 16-ounce frozen coffee drink has over 400 calories and 20 grams of fat, which is one-third of your recommended daily fat intake! That does just as much damage as:

- One Quarter Pounder
- One Burrito Supreme
- Three Original Drumsticks
- Two Bavarian Crème Donuts
- Or, one slice of Supreme Pan Pizza from a medium pie



To make matters worse, a 16-oz serving is often considered a "small" size. If you double your portion, you double the calories and fat!

Doesn't It Count As Dairy?

Other than a whole lot of sugar, fat and calories, frozen coffee drinks provide very little else in terms of nutritional value. Compare a frozen coffee drink to a glass of milk:

Nutrient	Frozen Coffee	Nonfat Milk
Serving	16-ounces	16-ounces
Calories	410 calories	180 calories
Fat	22 grams	0 grams
Cholesterol	75 milligrams	8 milligrams
Protein	3 grams	16 grams
Calcium	10% DV*	60% DV*

* DV= Daily Value. Percent daily values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet



Frozen coffee drinks are not a good source of protein, vitamins, and minerals, especially calcium, which is essential to bone health. If you do not drink milk, frozen coffee drinks are not an alternative.

It's too hot to drink hot coffee!

Despite their limited nutritional value, an occasional frozen coffee drink can blend into a balanced diet. Be sensible when you make your selection. If the frozen drinks are made to order, ask for low fat or skim milk in place of the cream. You'll save calories and fat grams:

16 oz frozen coffee drink with 2% milk =
240 calories & 2 grams of fat

16 oz frozen coffee drink with skim milk =
230 calories & 0 grams of fat

That will save you close to 170-180 calories and over 20 grams of fat!

If the drinks aren't made to order, iced coffee with skim milk is another alternative. If you sweeten the iced coffee with a sugar substitute, you will further reduce calories. When you order your

drink, request it without whipped cream, which is just another source of extra calories and fat.



Conquer Food Cravings

Vanessa R. Speers, M.Sc.

A craving is an intense desire for something—some food or substance such as alcohol or nicotine. Food cravings can be triggered by hunger, deprivation from overly restrictive dieting, or negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, boredom, or loneliness.

Most food cravings are psychological, although some people are convinced that carbohydrate cravings are physiological and therefore irresistible. In fact, the desire for sweet foods is probably hard-wired into our brains, as is the drive for obtaining pleasure. No matter the source of a food craving, there are ways to resist giving in to cravings.

1. Avoid becoming hungry.

Be sure to eat three meals a day plus planned snacks. Never go more than 3 or 4 hours without eating. Skipping meals only intensifies hunger and deprivation.

2. Don't declare certain foods "forbidden."

Doing so sets up deprivation and resentment. Learn to eat everything in moderation. If there is some food that is particularly troublesome, put it on the once-in-a-while list until you feel safer with it.

3. Catch a craving early.

A craving starts with a thought of something good to eat. It can be triggered by encountering a situation in which you see or smell tempting food, or by just thinking of something good and dwelling on the idea. If you encounter a tempting situation, leave immediately if possible. Go to the kitchen and get a big drink of water or fix yourself some herbal tea. Cross the street if you encounter a bakery window or an outdoor café with people eating. Avoid the food court at the mall. If a thought about eating something pops into your head, turn your attention elsewhere. Get busy on a project or talk to yourself out loud about something other than eating. Don't dwell on thoughts of food or eating.

4. Temporarily ruin your taste buds.

If you can't stop thinking about eating, disrupt your sense of taste or smell. Suck on a strong mouth mint or gargle with mouthwash. Brush your teeth or dab some cologne or strong smelling ointment under your nose. This only works for a while, so get busy doing something else to take your mind off eating.

5. Ride out a craving.

Cravings peak and subside like waves on the ocean. Plan to "surf the urge" by telling yourself to wait 10 minutes and then decide. In the meantime, get busy doing something else.

6. Minimize the damage.

If you must eat, don't overdo. Eat an amount that seems reasonable and appropriate. Then enjoy it without guilt.

7. Use the five D's.

Beat a craving by delaying at least 10 minutes before eating, distracting yourself in the meantime, distancing yourself from the temptation, determining how important it is for you to eat the food you crave, and deciding how to minimize damage if you do eat.

