

# Nutrition News And Notes

## Avoiding The Pitfalls Of “Mindless Eating”

(NAPSA)—Keeping food on your mind could help tip the dieting scales in your favor.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 66 percent of Americans are either overweight or obese and research shows that “mindless eating” is one of the contributing factors.<sup>1</sup>

“Mindless eating happens when we become distracted and stop paying attention to what, or how much, we’re eating,” says doctor and registered dietitian Joanne Lichten, also known as “America’s On-The-Go Health Guru” and author of *Dr. Jo’s No Big Deal Diet*. “People tend to mindlessly eat at the office—when they often consume food unconsciously while working—or at parties and social situations, where they pay attention to the conversation and not to what’s on their plate.”

According to Dr. Lichten, making small changes to your snacking habits can help control mindless eating...even something as simple as chewing a piece of sugar free gum.

In fact, a survey conducted by NPD Group for Trident® Gum found that nearly 75 percent of respondents chew sugarless gum instead of eating typical high calorie snacks such as cookies or cakes. Additionally, more than 40 percent of those gum chewers surveyed indicated that they chew sugarless gum as a snack in order to avoid eating high calorie snack foods.

“Chewing gum is the number one snack food consumed in Amer-



**Brain Food—Chewing sugarless gum can help satisfy your desire for something sweet and help you avoid “mindless eating.”**

ica<sup>2</sup>—and with good reason,” says Dr. Lichten. “Something as simple as chewing sugar free Trident Splash® when you’re in the mood for something sweet can help keep your diet on track. The gum has a liquid center and delivers a burst of sweet flavor with a unique combination of flavors. It’s a great-tasting, sugar free treat. And sometimes that burst of flavor is all you need to keep feeling satisfied.”

Dr. Lichten offers these additional tips for avoiding mindless eating:

- Don’t skip meals. While at first glance it may seem like a good way to cut calories, skipping meals only sets you up for extreme hunger (and overeating) at the next meal. If you’re not hungry for

breakfast, bring something to eat during the mid-morning.

- Purchase smaller bowls and plates for meals. Small plates mean smaller portions. Remember, you can always get up for a second helping if you need to.

- Rethink your plate. Fill one-quarter of the plate with protein such as lean meat, fish or poultry. Another quarter of your plate should be for starch such as rice, pasta or bread. Then, the remaining half of your plate should consist of fruits and vegetables.

- Bring preportioned snacks to the office. Plan ahead. Bringing a well-portioned, healthful snack from home can help keep you from mindlessly eating from a large bowl or candy jar.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Wansink, Brian, PhD, 2007. *Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think*. Bantam: New York

<sup>2</sup> NPD SnackTrack