

Family Chiropractic

*Courtesy of Harbourfront Family Chiropractic
by Dr. Warren Gage*



Comfort food

As a child, do you remember the foods your mother served you when you were sick? Or on holidays or your birthday? You came to associate warm and comforting feelings to these foods because they made you feel good. Maybe it was ice cream, macaroni and cheese, homemade chicken or pea soup, an apple pie or a hearty stew. You attached memories and emotional feelings to these foods because they made you feel better. They still do.

Why do we stay attached to these foods? Basically it's because these foods bring us back in our minds to simpler times, times when we were loved and cared for, times when responsibilities were non-existent and living was relatively easy. What's going on in your life today? Given the times, you are probably under a great deal of stress – emotional, physical and financial – the kind of stress that brings you back to comfort foods because you want to feel better.

So what's the problem with that? Well...most comfort foods contain rich amounts of fats, sugars, and salt – ingredients that give you instant pleasurable feelings that don't last long, cause weight gain and pose serious health risks. They may be good in the short run, but lead to depression and other health issues in the long run.

When you are sad, you are twice as likely to indulge in comfort foods as when you are happy. The key is to look at the reasons behind your binging on comfort foods and to deal with the stress and unhappiness that is causing you to crave them. Maybe you are experiencing a job loss, a divorce or the death of a loved one and you need some spiritual or psychological guidance to help you cope.

Start looking at the nutritional information on the packaging of some of your comfort foods. Notice the amount of calories, fat and sugar on the label; that information alone can help you to moderate what you are eating. Don't keep comfort foods in your house – if there's no ice cream, you can't eat it. Reach for an apple instead of a cupcake. Take a walk or call a friend to distract you from the food you crave. Keep a food diary to identify patterns of emotional eating, such as when you are stressed or angry.

And remember, regular chiropractic adjustments help your nervous system to deal with the effects of chronic stress – physical, emotional and chemical.