



# WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Well, hello there, my friend. Welcome to today's episode. Happy summer. I think we can officially say it's summer here. For those of you on the other side of the world, happy winter! I hope you enjoy it. But. But over here, for most of my listeners, it is summertime, and I thought that this would be a good episode to do on the week where we are about to experience 4th of July.

So in the US, July 4th is our Independence Day, and it is kind of a quintessential summer holiday where there's usually a lot of excess and a lot of enjoyment. And I thought it would be a great time to talk about how to enjoy summer holidays and just the summer in general without overeating, without overdoing it, maybe drinking too much, things like that and still enjoy ourselves, right? We don't have to be suffering or missing out or feeling like we're deprived. I think what happens a lot of times in the summer is there's a lot of traditional things, a lot of things that are maybe nostalgic for us.

I know for us, our I think I've talked about this on here before, but we have a parade that goes down the street literally a half a block from my house, and my kids have been going their entire lives, and it's a really fun community event, and we look forward to it every year. It's like, it's a really good time. It's just tradition. It's tradition to do that. And while we have traditions throughout the whole year, I think that the summer is a time where we do a lot of that.

A lot of people go to a summer place that they've gone to maybe every summer since they were even a child, potentially. Could be that you always take a family trip, maybe to different places, but you go together as a family or with groups of friends, just things that

are kind of outside that typical in that norm. And so talking about the summer and overeating in the summer is, I think, something that is worth looking at.

I was thinking about this a little bit more, and I was realizing that overeating in the summertime, like essentially stuffing yourself, is basically a super time honored tradition. And what I mean by that is when you think back a very long time ago. So humans, as we currently exist, have been around for about 200,000 years. So, I mean, even just 50,000 years ago, 100,000 years ago, obviously there's I don't even think there's any real record of so much of what we were doing or things like that.

But I think the experts in those fields recognize that when there were harvests and even before there was any harvesting, when we were just hunting and gathering, when things were fruiting, when fruits were ready to be eaten, when roots were ready to be eaten, when there were maybe more animals around and present to hunt. It was in the summertime. Things were warmer, and so it made sense for humans in order to survive the winter and in order to not starve. It made sense that in the summertime that you would eat as much as you could, and that probably meant putting some fat stores on, because, again, you were probably going to be living off of those throughout the winter.

So when you came across some berry bush, some wild berry bush, you made sure to eat as many as you possibly could, even if you were full. Even if you didn't want more, you probably ate more. I think this is an important thing for us to recognize, because I don't know. I mean, I'm just hypothesizing here, this is not based on any fact, but I just have to kind of guess and wonder that there is some element of this that is in us genetically that we're just driven to do that.

I think some of it is that a lot of the really palatable foods are what's available in the winter. Right? So we evolved to think that those foods taste good when we eat them. But the thing that we didn't have back in those days, just to point out, was a bunch of sugary stuff. We didn't have a bunch of processed stuff. Nothing was super concentrated. We didn't have really refined foods and products and things like that. And we do now, of course. So which is really, really different. And of course, our brains have not had a chance to adapt to that or evolve to figure out how to not overindulge so much in that.

So that's where this topic comes in, where it's time to kind of discuss it. We can understand. Oh, right. It totally makes sense that there are times when I want to overindulge at this time of year, and I can understand why that is and why that tendency exists. And then I also understand that there's ways to work through it, so I can still enjoy myself and still have a good time and have it be a great summer. And I don't need to not reach my goals. Whether your goals are maintaining weight loss or maybe you want to lose weight, but you just are, what I'm going to work on is maintaining for now, or you have lost weight and want to maintain.

I think some people also look at the summer as like, okay, this is my chance to really get the weight off. I'm, you know, it's better whether I'm able to get outside. More able to be more active. The food is fresher, easier to eat, fresh stuff and days are longer and all that kind of stuff. But we can end up just putting a lot of pressure on ourselves during the summertime. And so I was thinking about that some more too, and I was realizing, I think the pressures that we put on ourselves in the summer are kind of opposing, like for a lot of people, it's two opposing forces.

So one force is we've got a couple of months. We got to maximize it. We got to maximize the fun. We got to have the best time. We need to take vacations or travel. We maybe need to host some events or parties or attend some of them. We need to enjoy all the foods that are around. It's just like, make the most of it. This is our chance to do that before it gets cold again. For those of us who have children, it's, you know, kids are off. So it's like this is often the time when we're going and doing different things and our schedules are different, and we want to have fun with them and do fun things and have different experiences. There's often a lot less structure or the structure that we do have is all over the place.

That's what I'm dealing with right now. I have all kinds of different things on my calendar that I'm juggling, and in addition to my own stuff, this is my oldest is off now. He's gone traveling the world. So another episode on that. I'm too emotionally tender to discuss it now, but there's still lots to do. So that's the one opposing force where it's like the one pressure is have fun, have the best time, take advantage, make the best of it. Right. All of that okay. When it is presented to you, take advantage. Then the other pressure is you should be thin.

You should look good in your clothes. You should feel good in whether it's a swimsuit or just less clothing, because it's warmer. If you want to be losing weight, like you should be getting a lot of weight off because this is the best time to do it. So this is your chance. Like make sure you maximize it and get that weight off. You know, by the time it starts getting cold, like you're in a different place and same, even if you're just trying to not gain weight, if you're having the best time and eating all the foods and taking advantage of all the food and drink opportunities, you know, it can be hard then to not gain weight.

So you can see how those two things are opposing. Reminds me of a lot of the advertisements that we see, which either explicitly or implicitly state that we should be able to eat all the things like all of the food, drink all the things, and we should also be skinny and fit and have a flat stomach and things like that, right? Just like, wait, how is that supposed to work? So just understanding that I think is really helpful to go like, oh, no wonder this can sometimes feel really difficult. Or I end the summer feeling really disappointed. I have these expectations for myself to have fun, want to participate in that, whatever that looks like.

Even if it's just like enjoying a drink on your back porch, you know, having snacks like kind of a cocktail hour type of thing, and then still having dinner, all those things. And then it's like, oh, I ended up not actually achieving my goals. Like, we can end the summer not feeling great about things. So another element to talk about with summer is with scarcity. And, you know, it is it's limited, particularly where I live. I mean, I know in warmer weather climates, sometimes the summer is more like how we look at winter, where it's just like so oppressively hot people can't even really get outside that much. They're basically in water or in air conditioning all the time. And so maybe they aren't experiencing it similarly.

But still, this is like their chance to do all the things that we don't get a chance to do the rest of the year. And that can be, again with the ways that we interact, like just being outside more, more travel, more special events. This is my chance. So I better take advantage of it. And that comes with food and drinks too. It's like, well, this is my chance. How often do we get to sit outside and have a fire and roast marshmallows? Okay, well then I probably should have a marshmallow because this is my chance. Not even factoring in at all. Like, do you even want that? Do you even like toasted

marshmallows? Like, maybe you do. Maybe they're not really that big a deal to you. Maybe one a year is enough and you don't need to be having it every weekend with the kids, you know, like things like that, right?

Like, it's just that scarcity of, like, this is my chance. I better have it. I'm not going to have this experience again sometime soon, so I'll deal with the consequences later. Let me just take advantage now. And then. Another element I kind of alluded to it a little bit, but it's just the schedule being off, having maybe visitors coming to see you, maybe your kids are all over the place, different activities, just the things that maybe typically work for you or that routine is thrown off.

I mean, I know right now I've got two kids downstairs. I don't know what they're doing. We've got some plans a little bit later, but for now I'm like, I don't know what's happening. It definitely throws my brain for a loop. I'm like, wait, what's going on? What are we doing? Are you guys doing the things you're supposed to be doing? So that's what we got going on for the summer. So the good news is, is there's totally ways. To get through all these summer holidays and just the summer days in particular, without overeating. I think the biggest thing to recognize is that in the summertime and at the summer holidays and other days as well, there are so many things to enjoy in the summer that are not food or alcohol.

Okay, yes. Does a cold beverage taste good on a hot day? Absolutely it does. But it does not have to be alcoholic, and it doesn't have to be super sugary, and it doesn't have to be quote unquote special, you know, in the sense that it's like, oh, we put together this whatever thing that we don't usually drink. I mean, there are also plenty of other beverages that are also refreshing, also taste good. The specialness of it comes from the way you think about it, not because there's something so inherently special about it. And similarly, like you think about ice cream as summer food.

I mean, lots of people like ice cream all year round. But, you know, just when it's hot ice cream is nice. But then recognizing like, yeah, but you know what? Also so is watermelon, right. There's like a really good summer peach. Like there's lots of things that you can still enjoy that even are kind of more uniquely summery foods that are arguably probably a little bit more supportive for your body. Again, not to say you can't

ever eat ice cream, but do we need to be having ice cream like three four nights a week? Maybe not. It's something to think about.

I don't think I've mentioned it on here. Maybe I did, I can't remember, but last summer we had this really cute ice cream shop open up. Let me think. It's three blocks away from my house. Like not even long blocks. It's the three short blocks away from my house. Really adorable. Owned by a family from the area. And it's just like such a great community gathering place. We can walk there, people walk there, walk their dogs there, and one of the weather's nice. You just stand outside and go up to the window and get your ice cream. They make the cones fresh and all the stuff really nice. Premium ice cream and it would be easy to just make going to get an ice cream be just part of the regular routine.

And what I know from my experiences in my life is that, like, it doesn't take long before it's like, okay, now it's time to go get ice cream. Yeah. And your brain's like, oh, I like this habit. Let's keep it up. Let's keep doing this some more. This is awesome. So we need to put a little thought into it. So one of the things I think that is a very simple it sounds very, very obvious thing to do, but a lot of us don't think of it is to just recognize like, you know what? I can have that because I'm an adult and I can eat whatever I want. It's not a crime to eat ice cream, but how often do I really want to be eating it? Meaning my prefrontal cortex that can see the future?

Who understands the consequences of my behavior? Not your primitive brain. That's like. Well, when's it not a good time for ice cream? I always want ice cream right now. So when you think about it, you might go, you know what? Twice a month is probably good. And that's pretty nice. And that's something that I can look forward to, right. Because so much of the enjoyment that we get out of these quote unquote special things or things that we don't have that often is the specialness of them. When we have things a lot regularly, they cease to be as exciting.

They cease to be as special. So one option can just be like, hey, you know what? There's certain times and I plan for it, then I'm also not going to have it. If I'm full, I'm going to have it when I'm actually interested in eating this. I have room in my belly. I'm going to stop when it stops tasting delicious. To me, that doesn't mean you have to wait till it tastes bad because it probably won't taste bad, but when it stops tasting delicious,

you can stop. Think about that when you eat a piece of cake, like one of those huge slabs that they give you, or like Cheesecake Factory size slice.

It's like, buy that last bite. It does not taste as good as the first bite did. I'm not saying tastes bad, but it doesn't taste as good. Can you practice maybe stopping when the really heightened pleasure from it is no longer there, and you can save it for later? Ice cream is a little harder to save, but maybe instead of getting like the double scoop cone, you get like the kid size cup because then you can really enjoy it and there's not as much that's wasted. It's easier maybe to stop. Like there's definitely solutions. And I think that's one of the biggest things I want to impress upon you is you can have both. You can have tons of fun, you can enjoy all of it, and you can lose weight if that's your goal.

You can maintain weight loss. If that is your goal. You don't have to choose one or the other, or feel yourself like dragged from one extreme to the other. Or it's like, Now I'm enjoying everything, and now I'm living this austere lifestyle and I'm not letting myself have anything. And then, oh, and I'm going to have it all again. Like, you don't have to whiplash yourself back and forth in that way. A big part of this comes down to over desire, which comes very much from the way that we think about these foods. So when we have thoughts that these foods are so special, they're so good. Oh, I love that. That's my favorite flavor. It's so delicious.

It's not something I get to have. Very often we create more desire for those foods. And so say you always go, you know, around here this is not a tradition that we have, but there's an area of Wisconsin further north along Lake Michigan that a lot of people really love to go to. And many people have gone every summer, like, their whole lives. It's just like a tradition for people who are originally from here. And there are like, oh, we always went to this ice cream shop and we always went and had fish fry here. Or like whatever the different things are that people have and it's like you can have those things and also recognize, you know what, there's good ice cream everywhere.

There's seriously really good ice cream everywhere. So maybe you just realize, you know what? There's one flavor and I really like it there. And when we're there for a week, I have it once, maybe twice, and that's it. I don't need to have it every day. Right. And I don't need to have a ton, you know what I'm saying? The same thing. You're

traveling, it's hot. Maybe you're in Europe or something and you see the gelato. You can enjoy yourself. Of course. Do you have to have it like twice a day?

Do you need to have the huge cup? Maybe not. Those are the things that we can start to practice, right? Also, recognizing that there are really few summer foods, what we think of as summer foods that you can't eat at other times of the year. I mean, certainly some things are fresher, but usually those things are not the things that we're having issues with, right? It's not typically the fruit that we're overeating in such excess that's causing a ton of weight gain, right. So enjoy what's fresh. But we don't have to overeat and we don't have to look at all the, like special desserts that you can make with all those peaches. Like we can just enjoy a fresh peach because it tastes good.

And if you don't like peaches, whatever your version of that is, there's ways to approach that through a mind management lens so that you enjoy yourself, you have fun, you do the things you want to do, and you don't end up overdoing it. So for 4th of July, since that is coming up and for the majority of my audience is going to be in the US, it's something to really consider. What does the fourth look like for you? What are the traditions? What are the things you're expecting to do? A lot of people around here at least will, like, go off and spend time on a boat, or go to someone's home on a lake and have a party there, or things like that.

Like if you are bringing food along to contribute, make sure there's some stuff there that really works for you that you're happy to eat and is delicious and you enjoy and like, that's your side dish. You know, there's some of those side dishes that can really be a meal if they need to be. Like, there's ways to take care of yourself. Like maybe most of the drinks are alcoholic and you're like, yeah, I'll have one drink. But there's other things that I can bring to I'll maybe bring some sparkling water, or my latest thing that I have been having from time to time is nonalcoholic beer, which I don't know. I'm like late to the train there.

I'm not actually a big beer person at all, but every now and then it tastes really good and it's like not that big of a deal to have that. And then I'm not decreasing my inhibitions. I'm not having the counter effects of alcohol. I'm at an age now where when I drink alcohol, I mean, unless it's like basically before noon, my sleep is wrecked because of it. It's like, oh, this is a nice way for me to feel like I'm participating. And it's also doesn't have a



bunch of alcohol in it. Like there's just always solutions. So when you're thinking from that clear non-dramatic kind of a place not feeling sorry for yourself, not, oh, why do I have to struggle with this?

I wish this wasn't an issue for me. If you just go like, okay, I get to win all around here. I get to win by having a really fun time. I get to win by participating in all the things that I want to participate in, and I get to win by doing it in a way that serves me and my body. So how can I figure that out? What are the options? Because what I find is when I coach folks that have some concern about this, usually the solutions are right under the surface. I mean, as soon as we go, like, oh wait, did you know that you can actually have a great time and have your needs met, like physically and have it all work out and lose weight if that's what you want to do and not gain, if that's what you want to do.

And you're like, oh my gosh. Okay, so now we're in a solutions focused mindset. It's like it's already happened. I've already had that success. So how did I do it? Backtracking up. What are some options. It's like boom there it is. There's the solution. I just have to go and do. That tends to be so much easier. And then just recognize that you're going to try some stuff, and maybe you won't hit the nail exactly right on the head. And maybe some things will work and some things won't. And that is a normal part of the process.

Nothing's going wrong if you go, you know, I did great until they paraded out this thing and then okay. Yep. Then I had a hard time. Okay, good to know. So for next time, let's learn something from it. Let's allow that experience to advance us and move us forward so we can figure out what the next steps are for us. Okay, I can't wait. I hope you have a really, really, really good 4th of July. If you celebrate. If you don't, I hope you're just having the best summer. No pressure to have the best summer, but I hope you're really enjoying it.

It feels very special to us here when the weather's really nice. I was out walking my dog this morning and I was like, oh man, what a gorgeous day. So beautiful. So take advantage of those types of things when you can. But you know, I don't have to be eating or drinking anything to enjoy how beautiful it is. And neither do you. See, if some of these things resonate, try to maybe take one little thing that I talked about and apply it to yourself and see what happens. I'd love to just do it from an experimentation standpoint, I don't know. I mean, maybe it'll work, maybe it won't. Let's see.

Let's just see before we decide. And I think what I've seen in my life so many times are things that I really was very doubtful would work, end up being amazing, and work super well. So maybe you're not as doubtful as me, or have that cynical mindset that pops up from time to time, but let's give it a try. The worst thing that happens is you figure out something that really works well for you. All right, well, please enjoy your summer and whatever way that looks for you, and I will talk to you next week. All right? Take care. Bye bye.