

## I'm Home with My Kitchen *all Day!* OH MY!

You're working from home. Your children, spouse, or both are home. You are home with your kitchen *all day*—when your family wants meals, your children want snacks, YOU want snacks—there it is: the kitchen. OH MY! Your kitchen knows your name—knows you want to visit. It's calling. You're answering.

But you want your clothes to fit when you go back to work; at this rate they might not. What to do??

Here are some action steps for you to try one by one:

- **Remember: What you see is what you want**—put tempting items in the back of the cabinets out of sight (or get rid of them altogether—and don't buy any more). At my house, I can't walk anywhere away from my desk that doesn't go through the kitchen. Keeping anything enticing on the counter is like a siren song—I'm guessing it's like that for you too, especially now that everyone's level of stress is higher than normal. We've discovered that curbside pickup at the grocery store keeps us from buying things that aren't on our shopping list—you *do shop with a written list, right?*
- **Set a meal routine**—you don't have to worry about little league practice for a while—establish times for meals and times when the kitchen is *CLOSED*. For example, if breakfast is at 7 am, lunch at noon, and dinner at 5 pm, then declare "kitchen closed" from 8:15-11:30 am, 1-4 pm, and 6:30 pm to 6:30 am—make a **STOP** sign if you have to! Set out a bowl of apples and tangerines on the counter as snacks and *stand firm—with yourself and everyone else!*
- **Use your extra time to cook fresh food**—avoid highly processed and fried foods as much as possible—your clothes and your waistline will thank you for it when this is over. Trust me.
- **Once food is prepared and ready, plate it up in the kitchen or at the counter**—everyone can bring their plate for their servings—then quick-like-a-bunny put the leftover food in storage containers and place them in the fridge—no one needs second helpings these days.
- **Revoke your membership in "The Clean Plate Club"**—you do *NOT* have to eat every crumb on your plate—take smaller portions to begin with and if you find you have that "full-ish" feeling when there's still food left—leave it! And if you are on table clean-up duty—**DO NOT, DO NOT, DO NOT** eat food from anyone *else's* plate once you remove it from the table! Don't. Do. It.
- **Only eat food that is properly set out on a plate and ONLY at your place at table.** Do not eat leftovers standing in front of the refrigerator or from dishes on the counter. Don't. Do. It.
- **Lay your fork down next to your plate between bites and chew each bite at least 15-20 times** (unless it's oatmeal, mashed potatoes, or gelatin—I just can't get 15 chews out of those!). Give your brain the time to register that you are eating and then figure out when you are full—it will tell you to **STOP**—listen then obey.
- **Do not watch TV or play games on your phone during meals**—turn off the TV wherever it is and put all cell phones in a basket in the living room during meals. Talk to *each other*. You're family.
- **Drink water throughout the day**—*hydrate!* We can often confuse thirst with hunger and filling one with the other doesn't get the job done. Eat nutritionally balanced meals and enjoy as much water as you can with and in between each meal. Your body will thank you for it.

Your kitchen will always be with you. Get into these habits now and when we all resume whatever our new normal routines will be, these will still apply—and don't forget there will still be weekends when we're all home. I hope that these action steps will keep you from stomping around the house saying: "I'm home with my kitchen *all day!* OH MY!"