

HO 11.1 High-Risk Situations, Lapses, and Relapses

In this activity, you will be given a high-risk situation or small lapse related to healthy eating. If you choose the best way to handle the situation, you will prevent a relapse or collapse. So, choose carefully! Answers are found on page 3.

High-Risk Situation

Goal: Prevent a short-term lapse of unhealthy eating.

Steve Smith was recently promoted to head sales manager and transferred to another city. Next week, he, his wife, Cindy, and their daughter plan on driving alongside their movers, leaving their friends and family so that they can begin their new life. While living in their former city, the family had been participating in a 5-a-day campaign in which they committed to eating at least 5 fruits and vegetables every day. After years of eating very few fruits and vegetables, the family was proud that they had been able to maintain their 5 servings a day for almost 6 months. However, with the stress of the move, uncertainty over their new location, and other priorities likely to surface, the situation that they were about to enter would be classified as high risk. They're concerned that they won't get enough fruits and vegetables during the drive to their new home and during the first day or two of unpacking.

What suggestion would you give the Smiths to prevent them from lapsing into their old habits of not getting enough fruits and vegetables?

- a. The Smiths should monitor their intake of fruits and vegetables over the next few weeks.
- b. The Smiths should set new goals that are more realistic to their new situation.
- c. The Smiths should plan ahead and think of ways that they can have a portable supply of fruits and vegetables along with them during their move.
- d. The Smiths should check their hunger level before grabbing snacks from convenience stores along the way.

Lapse

Goal: Get back on track quickly to prevent a longer-term relapse of unhealthy eating.

Unfortunately, the Smiths got so wrapped up in their moving plans that they didn't plan ahead and bring fruits and vegetables with them during their trip. It has been a week and a half, and Cindy admits that her family has eaten only about one fruit or vegetable a day since they left their old home.

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What suggestion would you give the Smiths to prevent their short-term (weeklong) lapse from becoming a relapse?

- a. The Smiths should set new goals that are more realistic for their new situation.
- b. The Smiths should realize that this is a stressful time right now and make a commitment to start back up with their 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day in one month.
- c. Steve should insist that his wife, Cindy, go to the supermarket and buy fresh berries.
- d. The Smiths should avoid negative thoughts such as "We are too stressed right now to worry about getting in our 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day," and instead think about simple, appealing ways that they can get back on track.

Relapse

Goal: Devote your full efforts to getting back on track and preventing a relapse from progressing to a total collapse.

Winter has arrived, and Steve and Cindy have come up with yet another excuse to avoid getting back on track with their 5-a-day goal. Steve and Cindy's local farmers' market has closed, and the selection of fresh fruits and vegetables at their favorite supermarket has become limited. Steve's favorite fruits are "tasteless" and "bruised," and Cindy's favorite fruits are too expensive to buy on a weekly basis. Steve and Cindy are not keen on the idea of buying icy frozen produce or canned mushy fruit, and they see their healthy eating goal of increasing their fruit and vegetable intake going down the drain.

What must Steve and Cindy do to prevent a total collapse of their healthy eating goal?

- a. They should review the benefits of eating lots of fruits and vegetables and think of ways that they can bust their barriers related to increasing their fruit and vegetable intake.
- b. They should admit their failure to achieve 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day and attribute their failure to their new location.
- c. Steve and Cindy should force themselves to eat canned and frozen fruits during the winter months and hope that they can get through the season.
- d. They should vow (through a written and signed contract) that they'll eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables a day starting next Monday, even though they know that it will be highly unlikely that they will achieve this goal.

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ANSWERS

High-Risk Situation: c. By planning ahead and thinking about how they might bring ready-to-eat fruits and vegetables on their trip, the Smiths will likely meet their healthy eating goal. A high-risk situation or event can often be turned into a low-risk situation or event with a little planning.

Lapse: d. By avoiding negative thoughts, the Smiths will be less likely to give up on their healthy eating goal. If instead they think about simple ways that they can get back on track, they'll be more likely to succeed. Negative thinking rarely leads to positive outcomes.

Relapse: a. By reviewing the mental, physical, and health benefits of eating fruits and vegetables, the Smiths will likely increase their motivation for getting back on track. Also, the family should identify their major barriers to eating fruits and vegetables in their new city. They can then think about ways that they could work through their barriers and get back on track.