

# Munch ON THIS



## **Habits**

*By Marcia Rae  
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Gus, my dog, knows what's happening next based on which shoes I put on. Am I going to work? Are we going to the river? He knows my habits better than I do.

We live by habits and some of that is very good. We stop at stop signs, move through our day partly on auto-pilot, do the dishes, etc. often with little conscious effort required around many of our activities. Stuff has habits; and relationships and houses. Things run in a certain order, are done in a certain way.

Food and how we do food is hugely habitual. The grocery lists are the same week after week. The menus are the same. When we go to our favorite grocery, we know what is where and we move through the store in the same direction, visiting the same aisles. In the kitchen, we move around the kitchen preparing a meal, reaching for the knife, the measuring spoon, the kettle absentmindedly, while listening to the family squabbling over the same daily rituals – all habitual.

Ever so often I actually notice one of my habits and like Dr. Phil, I get to ask myself "how's that working for you?" Sometimes the answer is not so good. And so I ask you – how are your food habits working for you? Do you have energy? Are you slim and trim? Do you easily fight off infection? How are your heart and arteries? Do you have diabetes?

This past year we have heard a lot of talk about the high cost of health care. But we haven't heard much about our national collective habits around food, and how these habits affect our individual health and the astronomical costs we, as a country, experience as a result. Two thirds of us are overweight. One third is obese. The 2009 leading causes of death -

- Heart disease: 631,636
- Cancer: 559,888
- Stroke (cerebrovascular diseases): 137,119
- Chronic lower respiratory diseases: 124,583
- Accidents (unintentional injuries): 121,599
- Diabetes: 72,449

All except accidents are directly or indirectly a result of how we eat and what we eat.

What to do? Join us this Saturday for Munch Night. We will watch the movie, *Ingredients*, followed by facilitated discussion with Sharon Thornberry, 2009 winner of the Billi Odegaard Public Health Genius award. Learn more about the links between food and health.

PS - Learning more is not a commitment to change. Just come and munch - 6 p.m. at Bella Cucina. \$8.50 for buffet lasagna (vegetarian version available), salad, and dessert.

Munch on This – How are your food habits working for you?

PSS – Mark your calendars for the opening of the 2010 Brownsville Farmers Market, April 17.

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