

# Turn High-Risk Situations into Personal Wins

You have already looked at some high-risk situations. You learned to deal with parties and holidays by planning ahead. Remember some of the tips in Chapter 14?

- ▶ Plan ahead how many RED foods you will eat.
- ▶ Eat a healthy snack before going to a party.
- ▶ Take healthy foods with you to a party.
- ▶ Ask the host in advance to serve healthy foods.
- ▶ Focus on an activity instead of food.
- ▶ Don't stand by the RED foods.
- ▶ Fill up on healthy foods instead of RED foods.

Now we are going to look at some other high-risk situations. You can learn how to handle high-risk situations. You've just got to prepare and keep trying.

## Identify high-risk situations you face ...

Do you think that eating at fast-food restaurants is risky? It is for most people. So are celebrations based on food. The tips in Chapter 14 will help with celebrations. The tips in Chapter 15 will help you handle fast-food restaurants.

But what about bad weather? Tests? Papers and extra pressure at school? An argument with a friend? Or being left out of plans your friends have made? Changes in your daily schedule? Being with a friend who just wants to watch television?

All of these situations can put you at risk for overeating. So can many others. They can put you at risk for not getting physical activity. They can make it hard to manage your weight. They can make it hard to stay healthy. Use the Help Sheet to identify some of the high-risk situations you face most often.

## ...and turn them into personal wins.

How can a high-risk situation be a positive? It can if you learn to manage it. It can if you plan in advance. Learning to meet a challenge helps you build confidence. It helps you build your skills so you can do it again and again. Each time you come

### KEY GOALS

*Dealing with high-risk situations will help you meet your 4 key goals:*

- ⊙ Limit RED foods
- ⊙ Increase GREEN activity
- ⊙ Hold Family Meetings
- ⊙ Keep Track of Weight

through a high-risk challenge, you improve your skills. You gain confidence. You feel better about yourself. That's how a high-risk challenge can become a personal win for you.

The key, of course, is to make sure you learn to succeed.



### Here's what you'll learn about in this module:

- ▶ Identifying your high-risk situations
- ▶ Planning in advance and in detail for them
- ▶ Using mistakes to improve your next plan





## Really plan it out— in advance and in detail.

- ▶ Use your experience when you plan ahead. Use your imagination. What are your goals for the high-risk situations? Write them down on the Help Sheet. What might get in the way? What could go wrong? Write it down.
- ▶ Then use your problem-solving skills with each possible barrier. Remember the 6 steps? Identify the specific barriers. Brainstorm possible solutions. Compare solutions. Make a plan. Put the plan to work. And evaluate how the plan worked.

Say you have a tough week at school coming up. Maybe a big paper and some tests to prepare for. How could you handle it and still meet your GREEN activity goals? You could give up. You could say to yourself, "It's impossible to meet my physical activity goal. I can't do 30 minutes of physical activity a day and still do what I need to do for school."

If you are going to join friends at a fast-food restaurant, exactly what will you eat? Will you have a salad or a grilled chicken sandwich without the mayo? Or will you just have a diet soda? What will you say when a friend tells you to have a cheeseburger? Will you be too embarrassed to say, "No"? Will you feel like you are not part of the group if you say, "No"? How will you deal with your feelings?

If you are planning to get physical activity, plan to pack all your workout clothes, your shoes, and even your socks. Do you need a water bottle? How are you getting there? What time will you start? Will you ask anyone to join you? Who?

Or you could take another approach. For example, you could plan to take a break from studying or writing your paper every hour. You could walk around the block. Maybe it's only for 10 minutes. But it will give you some exercise. The break will help you focus better when you get back to work. You could also do extra physical activity on the weekend before. This way, even if you can't get 30 minutes of physical activity every day of the week, you can get an average of 30 minutes a day over the whole week. That's a way to meet your overall goal of getting 200 minutes of GREEN activity a week.

- ▶ Plan the details. Thinking about the details makes it more likely that your plan will work. After you have made your plan, picture yourself putting it into action. The more barriers you see in advance, the

When a barrier blocks your way, problem-solving helps you be flexible. It helps you find another way to reach your goal.

better. The more details you plan for in advance, the more likely you are to feel confident. And the more likely you will handle the challenges you will meet.



## What should I do when I fail at a high-risk situation? That's no way to feel like a winner.

No, but it can be. It all depends on how you handle your "failure." The most important thing is not to look at learning to handle high-risk situations as a black-and-white, success-or-failure type of thing. It isn't. Learning to handle high-risk situations is a *process*. It's like learning to ride a bike, shoot baskets, or hit a ball. It's a *process* that takes some time and continued effort.

Take a high-risk situation you've been in. Ask yourself about what went right. The things that go right are your small wins. You can repeat those small wins the next time you face a similar situation. Ask what went wrong. Be as specific as you can. Probably not everything

did. What barriers did you meet that you didn't expect? These are things you can problem-solve about so can you build on your small wins.

By learning from your mistakes, you can come away a winner. Just keep in mind that facing

The more details and barriers you can plan for in advance, the more likely you are to feel confident handling new challenges.

Tyrone was upset with himself. He had eaten a lot of RED food snacks at a party. He'd thought about it in advance. He had even made a plan so that it would not happen. But it did anyway. That's what made him feel so discouraged.

He talked to his parents at a family meeting. His father pointed out some things that worked. Tyrone had asked the host to have healthy foods to eat, and she did. "That part of your plan worked," he said. "And you snacked on fruits and vegetables at the party just as you had planned. That part also worked. These are your small wins. You can build on them. Let's try to figure out exactly what went wrong."

Tyrone said, "Instead of going outside to be physically active, I got caught up in a conversation with Jose near the RED foods."

"And that's where your plan broke down. It was just too hard to stand next to the RED foods and not snack on them," his father said. "It's good news that you didn't eat as many of them as you would have before. Eating the GREEN foods first helped."

"What kept you from moving away from the RED foods?" his father asked.

Tyrone said that he had felt like saying, "Let's get away from all these chips. I don't want to eat too much. Let's go outside and talk or do something active." But, Tyrone told his dad, "I just didn't feel comfortable saying that to Jose."

"Feeling uncomfortable like that was the barrier to success," his father said. "How could you deal with this problem in the future?" he asked.

They brainstormed about what to do. They came up with 4 things Tyrone could do differently next time. He could tell some of his friends before going to the party that he wanted to stay away from RED foods. He could ask them to help him. He could ask his good friend Sam to rescue him if he sees him trapped by the RED foods. And he could practice some things to say. That would help him feel more comfortable speaking up for himself.

Tyrone felt much better. He thanked his parents. "I hope there's a party soon. I'd like to try again. I think I could really succeed with this new plan," he said.

His father said, "Great. I'll bet you can. I'll practice with you. That way you'll know exactly how to talk to your friends."

What barriers did Tyrone face?

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What were Tyrone's small wins?

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What do you think of Tyrone's new plan?

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If you were in Tyrone's situation, what would you try to do?

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Learning to handle high-risk situations is a process. It's like learning to ride a bike, shoot baskets, or hit a ball. It takes some time and continued effort.

just make a better plan. That's how to bring success out of what you thought was a failure. It will also help you be more successful in the future. It will help you feel more confident that you can handle other high-risk challenges.



### What will help me learn to deal with high-risk situations so that I can meet my goals?

### Skills and Goals for dealing with high-risk situations

- ▶ Identify 2 situations that are high-risk, one for healthy eating, and one for GREEN activity.
- ▶ Plan in advance and in detail for them.
- ▶ Talk about my plans at family meetings.
- ▶ Use any mistakes to improve my next plan.

high-risk situations is a learning process, not a one-time test. Adding up small wins can make you a big winner in the end.

Sometimes people get down on themselves when they make a mistake. They fall into negative thinking. They blame themselves. That's not helpful. It's also not fair to yourself. One slip-up isn't the end of the world. In the long run, *it's the buildup of your small wins that counts. It's the pattern of your lifestyle choices that really matters.*

So, if you must blame something, blame your plan, not yourself. Next time you will

- ▶ Take some time this week to identify a few high-risk situations you face. When is healthy eating at risk? When is getting enough physical activity at risk?
- ▶ Then use your problem-solving skills to make plans that will help you turn high-risk challenges into personal wins. You will improve your skills, self-confidence, and self-esteem. Try to make plans for at least 2 situations.
- ▶ Get help from your parents. What suggestions do they

have? How can they help you with your plans? Write your plans down. Keep them handy for the next time you meet one of these challenges.

- ▶ Identify your small wins as often as you can. Celebrate them.

Notes to myself—some things I want to keep in mind this week:

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# Turn High-Risk Situations into Personal Wins

## Identify Situations That Are High-Risk for You

*In the first column, put a check mark (✓) next to the situations that are high-risk for you.*

*Put 2 check marks (✓✓) next to the situations that are very high-risk for you.*

*Write down any other situations that are high-risk for you in the blank spaces at the end of the chart. Check them off with 1 or 2 check marks also.*

*In the last column, write down the reason each situation puts your health at risk.*

High-risk for me?	Situation:	What makes it risky?
	Bad weather	
	Being at a friend's house	
	Being home alone	
	Celebrations/Parties	
	Eating too fast	
	Family meals	
	Fast-food restaurants	
	Feeling upset	
	Food in my kitchen	
	Hanging out with friends	
	Holidays/Vacations	
	Pressure at school	
	Restaurants	
	Schedule changes	
	Snacks	
	Stress in the family	
	Stress with friends	
	Traveling	
	Visiting relatives	

## Identify Situations That Are High-Risk for You (continued)

High-risk for me?	Situation:	What makes it risky?
	Watching television	
	Weekends	
	Working after school	

## Turn High-Risk Situations Around

*In the following tables, write down several high-risk situations from the chart above. Use situations that have 2 check marks next to them. Then, brainstorm. List all the possible ways you could deal with these high-risk situations.*

*Next, put a ✓ by all the strategies that would be helpful. Put an X by the ones that are realistic. These are strategies that you are really able to do.*

*Finally, write down your plan of action.*

High-risk Situation:		
Possible ways to deal with situation:	Helpful	Realistic
My plan of action:		

*After trying out your plan, answer these questions:*

How did my plan work?

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What were the small wins?

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What were the barriers?

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What did I learn?

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## Turn High-Risk Situations Around (continued)

High-risk Situation:

Possible ways to deal with situation:

Helpful

Realistic

My plan of action:

*After trying out your plan, answer these questions:*

How did my plan work?

What were the small wins?

What were the barriers?

What did I learn?

High-risk Situation:

Possible ways to deal with situation:

Helpful

Realistic

My plan of action:

*After trying out your plan, answer these questions:*

How did my plan work?

What were the small wins?

What were the barriers?

What did I learn?





# Turn High-Risk Situations into Personal Wins

## Pin down your high-risk challenges.

- ▶ What situations can put you at risk for overeating?
- ▶ What situations make it hard to get the GREEN activity you need?



## Plan for success—in advance and in detail.

- ▶ Use your experience when you plan ahead. What are your goals for the situation? Write them down.
- ▶ Use your imagination. What things could go wrong? Write them down.
- ▶ Use your problem-solving skills with each possible barrier.
- ▶ The more details you see in advance, the better.
- ▶ The more barriers you plan for, the more likely you are to build upon your small wins and succeed.
- ▶ Picture yourself putting your plan into action. Picture yourself being successful.

## Celebrate your wins.

Each time you come through a high-risk challenge, you:

- ▶ Improve your skills.
- ▶ Gain confidence.
- ▶ Build your self-esteem.
- ▶ Have a personal win.

## Remember the six steps in problem-solving?

After you make a goal, you:

1. Identify specific barriers
2. Brainstorm solutions.
3. Compare solutions.
4. Make a plan.
5. Put the plan to work.
6. Evaluate the plan.

## What to do when you fail at a high-risk situation

- ▶ Don't look at it as a black-and-white, success-or-failure type of thing. It isn't. It's a *learning process*. It takes time and effort.
- ▶ Blame your plan if you must blame something. Then improve it.
- ▶ Use mistakes to improve your next plan. Ask yourself:
  - ▶ What went right? Build on these *small wins* next time you face a similar situation.
  - ▶ What went wrong? Plan for these barriers next time.