

# Cravings and Stress Eating





## Introduction

- Author of “Healthy with Hanifa: A Woman’s Guide to Holistic Health & Fitness”, Registered Holistic Nutritionist, Wholyfit mentor instructor, and certified fitness instructor.
- Discussion format—feel free to interrupt with a little hand-sign icon or throwing a comment in the chat
- Foods cravings – 1<sup>st</sup> slide – what could be going on from a physiological standpoint  
2<sup>nd</sup> slide – what to do about it

What do you crave?



# What's a Craving?

- Qualities of a craving:
  - usually not considered good for you
  - something indulgent – extreme saltiness, extreme greasiness, extremely sweet, spicy
  - highly caloric
  - novelty – crunchy, bbq-flavored, bright red, gooey
  - makes you obsessive
  - addictive--chemical
  - linked to certain physiological changes—stress, pregnancy, PMS, menopause



It's not these foods that are a problem, it's the uncontrolled consumption of them to your own detriment.

So you feel really guilty afterwards, there are mood changes or you put on weight, feel bad about your body.

\*tips to “tame the tiger”



# Chocolate, Chocolate Desserts

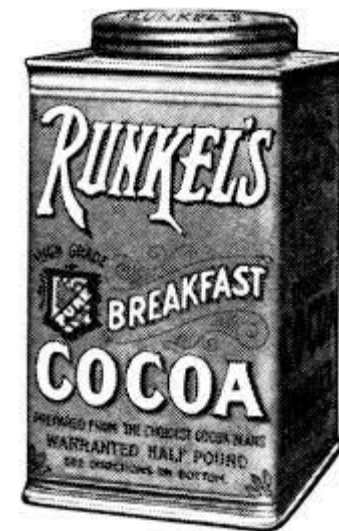
What's going on?

- Serotonin
- Dopamine
- Magnesium
- Sugar



# Chocolate (cont'd)

- Solution: a small piece of dark chocolate that's lower in sugar
- Unsweetened cocoa powder
- Use cocoa powder for chocolate smoothies, chocolate-avocado milkshakes, baking
- Eat more nuts and greens for magnesium



# Deep Fried Foods

- Includes French fries, potato chips, fried chicken, anything deep fried
- 
- high-starch, high-GI, even if not sweet
  - filling
  - oiliness, crunch





# Deep-fried Foods (Cont'd)

- Add healthy oils such as avocado oil, nut oils (flax oil), olive oils RAW to your steamed or cooked vegetables
- Take a fish oil
- Eat more oily fish such as salmon, mackerel, herring, etc.



# Salt, MSG

- Your adrenals, stress glands require salt
- Salt and MSG magnifies flavor
- MSG activates pleasure centers in the brain, addictive
- Iodine deficiency or thyroid issue?



# Salt, MSG (Cont'd)

- Fine if you don't have issues with high blood pressure
- Get the good salt – unrefined; unprocessed sea salt is rich in vitamins and nutrients
- Eat more fish or take an iodine supplement
- Deal with stress



# Spicey Foods

- Down, feeling depressed, spicey foods act as a pick-me-up, desire for intensity in taste
- Congestion
- Sluggish circulation
- Associated with the release of endorphins, activates nervous system



# Spicey Foods

- Regular exercise increases circulation and endorphin-release (endorphins are a natural painkiller)
- Not necessarily a bad craving; cultural, have some in moderation
- Look at underlying issues – are you stressed? Are you depressed? What are you looking to “spice up” your life?



# Sweets & Carbs in general

- Candy, desserts
- White rice, white pasta, potatoes
- Quick source of energy
- Stress, body wants usable energy to fight or store
- Serotonin, dopamine spike
- Blood sugar roller-coaster



- Perhaps diet is too strict?
- B6, helps create neurotransmitters; hormones
- Eat whole grains
- Potatoes, sweet potatoes
- Use honey, maple syrup, monk fruit sweetener as a substitute; stevia, monkfruit, alternative bakeries, etc.
- Ensure that you have protein and fat with a carb



# (Bad) Cravings vs. a Physical Need (Good)

- You crave what you need
- However, a craving also includes what you don't need e.g. too much refined sugar or a deep-fried fat
- Is it a junk food vs. a whole food?
- How often do you crave this?
- What does the rest of the diet look like?
- After a craving, you may feel worse; after a need, you'll feel full/satisfied





# Stress Eating



# What is stress-eating?

- usually there's an acute or chronic trigger of some sort e.g. break-up, exams, work stress
- it's not based on hunger, it's based on emotion
- eating an “extreme” food or “comfort” foods; maybe a social component
- mindless
- binging
- guilt involved afterwards



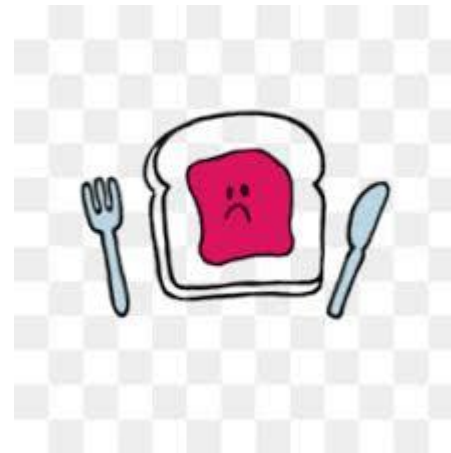
What triggers stress-eating with you?



# What To Do About Cravings & Stress-eating

- you can make sure there are no junk foods in the house; mainly a whole-foods diet
- being a bit more mindful

BUT . . .



Taking the healthier option doesn't always work, here's why:



- Apple – 95 calories, 0 g fat, 25 carbs

Vs.

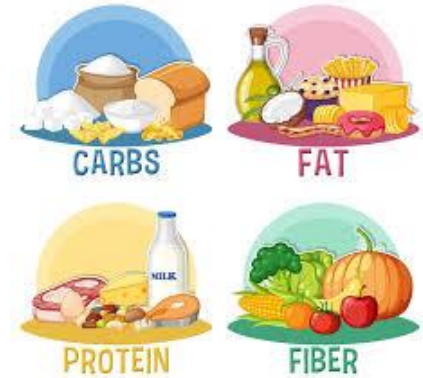
Donut –269 calories, 15 g fat, 31 carbs

The donut has more of what you want, but not in a good way!



# The Solution: Eat Balanced, Eat Enough, Eat Whole Foods

- Get more of what you need throughout the day
- High protein breakfast
- Protein, carbs, fats at each meal
- Please do not skip meals
- Never leave a meal unsatisfied and hungry – the infamous “chicken salad” analogy
- Once you are satisfied and hungry throughout the day, you’ll only have a little bit of room for a little indulgence.



# Eat Your Craving Frequently in Smaller Doses

## E.g. 1 – Chocolate

Have a small square of quality, dark chocolate every day or use unsweetened cocoa powder more often in shakes, smoothies, and baking.



## Eg. 2 – Potatoes, French fries

Baked French fries at lunch, most lunches or several times a week, take a B6 supplement regularly.



# Helpful

- Food app/journal – are you eating enough? Protein with carbs?
- Non-food substitute: relaxing music, fun computer game, a walk, light exercise (like Wholyfit), prayer, scriptures



Any tips, tricks, or solutions you'd like to share?

