



## Silencing Hunger Cravings

Special Report



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# 1 Introduction

You're watching TV and suddenly a cola commercial comes on. Images of tall, frosty glasses filled with that cold, refreshing beverage fill your screen. You can almost taste the sweet, spicy flavor of the cola and feel the effervescent bubbles bursting on your tongue. Suddenly your mouth feels dry. You remember that there's a can of cola in the fridge, and you can't resist getting up to pour yourself a drink.

That, my friend, is the power of a craving: a sudden, overwhelming and intense desire for a particular food. And it can completely derail our best intentions to eat right and stay healthy. But how do we resist? The answer is to learn what causes cravings in the first place. By understanding the root of the problem, it becomes easier to fight back – or indulge in a way that is less harmful to our bodies.

*This guide will explore cravings: what they mean, and how to overcome them.*



## Am I Really Hungry? Cravings vs Hunger

Ever been to a buffet where you've filled your plate again and again? Ever notice that you can be bored or feel 'full' after eating a meal and then suddenly feel 'hungry' when dessert is brought out? If you've answered 'yes' – and who wouldn't – then you've experienced first-hand the difference between hunger and a craving.

### *What's the difference between hunger and a craving?*

Physiological hunger generally comes on slowly, and typically is accompanied by physical symptoms such as a grumbling stomach, feeling a little unfocused, lowered concentration and/or dizziness as a result of low blood sugar. This is your body's way of telling you it needs fuel: you need to eat. With true hunger, you'd be more likely to eat something without too much regard to what it is, assuming you liked the food. If you were hungry, you wouldn't turn down an apple if a friend offered it to you.

Cravings, on the other hand, are different than hunger in that they are more directed to a specific food, taste, or texture such as "I feel like something crunchy," or "I'm in the mood for something savory." In the example above, if you were experiencing a craving, you'd turn down the apple in favor of something else.

Cravings push you to eat even when your body doesn't need more fuel (food energy). If you are feeling 'hungry' one or two hours after eating, then you're probably experiencing a craving. Cravings result in more radical behavior, and the motivation to follow the sensation is stronger. Have you ever gone out of your way for some specific food or restaurant?

### *Is it a craving or is it hunger?*

If you're thinking about eating, ask yourself, "am I really hungry?" If it's been 3-4 hours since the last time you ate, then it's likely you're hungry; otherwise you're probably having an emotionally based craving. Ask yourself why? Is it because you're bored, lonely, or anxious? If this is the case, you need to find out why you're feeling that way, and then do something that doesn't involve food to meet that need.



### ***Quick! Distract me***

There are different ideas on how best to deal with cravings. Researchers believe that the life of a craving is about 10, to at the most, 20 minutes – meaning that if you can wait it out, it will pass. Many times the craving passes only temporarily, and may return, leaving you to deal with it all over again. It's best to wait it out with some kind of distraction – answer some emails, pick up that book you've started to read, go to your bedroom and lie down for a few minutes, phone a friend, do the laundry, clean the kitchen sink, get back to your hobbies, or better yet, go for a quick walk. You get the idea. There are countless ways to change your focus away from food. Studies also suggest that we often mistake thirst for hunger, so try drinking a big glass of water and wait to see if the craving passes.



### ***Plan to prevent cravings***

As the saying goes, people don't plan to fail, but they fail to plan. Building room for 'treats' can help you avoid cravings, or at least help to prevent them from getting out of control. Denying yourself completely is never a good idea, as extremes tend to lead to extremes, and this may result in bingeing or overeating. Having a reasonable portion of a favorite food a couple of times per week will go a long way in helping to prevent cravings from getting the best of you.

## Got Sugar Cravings? 4 Truths About Sugar



**Bad news:** Sugar addiction has led to a huge health crisis in many countries. **The good news?** You can detox from sugar and still enjoy your favorite treats! But first, how much do you really know about sugar? Take this quick quiz to find out:

***Which statement about sugar is true?***

- A. It's so important that your body will produce glucose (your brain's favorite energy source) from fat.
- B. It can be poison when refined, concentrated, or overeaten. All of it. Even the sugar from fruit, like that fruit juice concentrate used to sweeten your "fruit snacks."
- C. It's addictive—probably as addictive as cocaine and heroin and harder to avoid than tobacco or alcohol.
- D. It can be enjoyed in moderation, and it's pure pleasure so go ahead and enjoy from time to time.
- E. All of the above

If you answered “All of the Above”, you’re right! Here’s why:

### ***Sugar Truth #1: Sugar is Good for Us***

“Table” sugar is composed of two linked molecules: glucose and fructose. In the words of Dr. Robert Lustig, a pediatric endocrinologist, who is one of the leading proponents of the fact that many of us eat literally poisonous amounts of sugar: “glucose (kind of sweet, and not that much fun), and fructose (very sweet, and a whole lot of fun)<sup>1</sup>.”

Glucose is a simple sugar found in plants, and your bloodstream directly absorbs it following digestion. Glucose is a basic building block for all life, from bacteria to large mammals like ourselves to great trees. It’s also your brain’s favorite food. Your brain consumes about 20% of the calories that your body needs for basic maintenance, like digestion and breathing. And your brain prefers to get those calories from glucose. This is why we naturally love sugar: it’s concentrated energy for our most vital organ and foods that are naturally sweet, like fruit, are almost always non-toxic.



### ***Sugar Truth #2: Sugar Can Be Poisonous***

Sugar, especially fructose, which is processed only in the liver, used to be extremely rare in the human diet. But now sugar, especially fructose, is a large part of our basic diet. So are refined carbohydrates, like white flour and potatoes (French fries) that the body easily converts to sugar.

To make matters worse, fructose has been hijacked to produce an artificial, super-concentrated sweetener known as “high-fructose corn syrup,” increasingly found in processed foods and beverages—even those considered “healthy”. High intake of high-fructose corn syrup has been linked to obesity and obesity-related disease, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart attacks, and more<sup>2</sup>.

Sugar is high-octane fuel and high blood sugar levels cause damage to your body and brain. When you eat anything that can be broken down to sugar, your body produces insulin to process that sugar for your body to use. And because high levels of blood sugar are toxic, your body is designed to store as much of the excess sugar as fat, as fast as it possibly can, rather

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<sup>1</sup> Lustig, Robert. (January 2, 2014.) The Sugar-Addiction Taboo. The Atlantic.

<sup>2</sup> Ha V, Jayalath VH, Cozma AI, Mirrahimi A, de Souza RJ, Sievenpiper JL. (June 22, 2013). Fructose-containing sugars, blood pressure, and cardiometabolic risk: a critical review. *Curr Hypertens Rep*.

than burn it as energy. Indeed, the fatter you are, the more blood sugar your fat may store as energy, leaving you hungrier than ever—and craving sugar more than ever<sup>3</sup>.

Overconsumption of sugar coupled with overweight can spell disaster: your cells can become increasingly resistant to insulin, forcing your pancreas to pump out more and more. This both makes it harder to lose the excess weight and ultimately overwhelms and exhausts the pancreas—at which point, your blood sugar can no longer be controlled. This condition is known as type 2 diabetes. But sugar doesn't just make us fat and develop diabetes. The extra insulin your body secretes due to insulin resistance has been shown to promote tumor growth, or cancer. Another hormone, literally called insulin-like growth factor, also promotes tumor growth<sup>4</sup>. “The cancer story is very early,” says Dr. Lustig, “But we know that sugar drives insulin resistance, and insulin resistance drives cancer,” he told Men’s Journal in an interview<sup>5</sup>.

### ***Sugar Truth #3: Sugar is Addictive***

Sugar is genuinely addictive. Sugar lights up the same pleasure receptors in our brains that cocaine does—and in laboratory studies involving rats, the rats tend to prefer sugar and other sweet rewards to cocaine<sup>6</sup>. And the more sugar we eat, the more we have to eat to make our brains feel good. Trying to reduce the amount of sugar in your diet (if you do it the wrong way) can lead to acute cravings—AKA withdrawal symptoms. This is a classic sign of sugar addiction.



### ***Sugar Truth #4: You Can Enjoy Some Sugar***

The problem is not the teaspoon of sugar in your coffee. And it's not the small slice of homemade cake that you occasionally enjoy. The problem of sugar addiction is caused by the excessive amounts of sugar that we are accustomed to eating from processed foods. Once you know how to avoid this sugar (and yes, it's incredibly hard to find it all!), you will know that you CAN enjoy some sugar without gaining weight or endangering your health.

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<sup>3</sup> Ludwig DS, Friedman MI. (May 16, 2014) Increasing Adiposity: Consequence or Cause of Overeating? J Am Med Assoc.

<sup>4</sup> Taubes, Gary. (April 13, 2011) Is Sugar Toxic? The New York Times Magazine.

<sup>5</sup> Lustig, Robert. (July 23, 2014) Sugar is the New Tobacco. Men’s Journal.

<sup>6</sup> Ahmed SH, Guillem K, Vandaele Y. (July 2013). Sugar addiction: pushing the drug-sugar analogy to the limit. Curr Opin Clin Nutr Metab Care.

## 4 How to Enjoy Sugar

Now that you know that sugar is necessary for your body, the issue becomes what type of sugar is best to consume, and in what quantity.

But first, here's a very scary statistic that shows just how deep our modern sugar addiction goes:

**The Average American Consumes 152 Pounds (69 kg) of Added Sugars...Every YEAR!<sup>7</sup>**

In the UK, the numbers aren't much better, with 109 lbs. (49.5 kg) of added sugar consumption every year. And Australians consume 117 lbs. (53 kg) of added sugar every year. Those numbers are even higher in teenagers.

Now, contrast that to the World Health Association's recommended maximum daily amount of ADDED sugar (including natural-sounding sugars like "fruit juice concentrate")<sup>8</sup>:

**25 grams per day, which comes out to about 6 teaspoons. That's all!**

We don't have to imagine what all the extra sugar is doing to us: the explosion of obesity and diabetes all around us, coupled with our own expanding waistlines, is entirely visible.

### *So, where is all this sugar hiding?*

Well, if you check the labels on your juice (40 grams of sugar per cup), vitamin water (30 grams of sugar per cup), and even high-bran breakfast cereal (24 grams of sugar per cup), you'll find things like:

- Agave nectar or syrup
- Beet sugar
- Brown rice syrup
- Brown sugar
- Cane juice
- Coconut sugar
- Corn syrup (including high-fructose corn syrup)
- Date sugar



<sup>7</sup> US Department of Agriculture. (2003.) Agriculture Fact Book 2001-2002.

<sup>8</sup> Jaslow, Ryan. (March 5, 2014) World Health Organization lowers sugar intake recommendations. CBS News.

- Dextran
- Dextrose
- Fructose
- Fruit juice
- Fruit juice concentrate
- Glucose
- Glucose-fructose
- Glucose solids
- Grape sugar
- Honey
- Icing sugar
- Invert sugar
- Malt syrup
- Maltose
- Maltodextrin
- Maple syrup
- Molasses
- Palm sugar
- Raw sugar
- Sucrose
- Turbinado sugar
- Wood sugar
- Yellow sugar



***These Sugars are in Many Foods You Don't Expect, such as...***

...foods that aren't sweet, like crackers and tomato sauce. They can be found in shockingly high amounts in "natural" foods, even those granola bars you picked because there were no chocolate chips in them—but didn't know they had so much "honey" and "maple syrup" you might as well have eaten a candy bar. The same goes for many reduced- or low-fat versions of sweets, to which extra sugar is added to make up for the difference in taste.

Eating these foods, without knowing how much sugar they have, is how you develop a sugar addiction even when you're trying not to eat sweets. Because it doesn't matter how healthy it sounds, it's still sugar. These foods are designed to make you crave them, which causes a blood sugar spike and then a sharp crash, which only makes you crave more.

And when many of us are struggling valiantly to watch our weight and eat all kinds of "low-fat," "healthy" foods... when unhealthy, processed foods are cheap and available... when nearly 70% of us are overweight or obese and... when a rising incidence of diabetes means our children are likely to be the first generation with shorter lives than our parents...

It's not us. It's not our genes and it's not our will power and it's not our lack of individual responsibility that got us here. It's not your fault.

And now that you know the truth, you can take steps to break your sugar addiction...

### **Without Giving Up Sweets!**

Freeing yourself from the processed sugar addiction doesn't mean never eating sugar again. Let me explain.

What you should begin to cut out from your diet is the processed sugar. Unprocessed sugar, like in fresh fruit, is the good stuff that you need—and it'll help you detox from the harmful processed sugars.

### **How to Detox from Sugar**

Some of you may want to go cold turkey, others may have more success if you do this gradually. Choose whatever works for you.

1. Get rid of any food or drink with any form of sugar in it: the suffix -ose indicates it's a sugar. And when it comes to sugar, juice is no better for you than soda.
2. Get rid of any food or drink with artificial sweeteners in it: the sweet taste primes your brain to want more sweet things but the lack of calories tells your brain to slow your metabolism. Not what you want.
3. Get rid of all refined carbohydrates, such as breads and bagels from processed flour, which the body readily converts to blood sugar, and often have sugar added to them. Instead, choose breads made from 100% whole grain and sprouted whole grain flour and unrefined carbs such as brown rice, hulled barley and steel-cut oats.
4. Stock your house with healthy, whole, unprocessed food. Make sure you have an ample supply of whole, fresh fruit and healthy proteins like milk and vegan cheeses and yogurts (full-fat, please, pastured if you can) as well as nuts and nut butters and spreads. Believe it or not, proteins can actually subdue sugar cravings, and "good" fats can help subdue to bad effects of sugars.



The Trim Down Club helps make this process easier by giving you customized weekly menus, so that you know exactly what you need to eat to lose weight and get healthy.

## ***5 Steps to Enjoy Good Sugar***

1. Once you've cut back on the unhealthy processed sugars, you can enjoy sweets in a healthy way by following these tips:
2. Never skip meals. A craving is much, much easier to handle when you're not hungry.
3. Breakfast, especially, should begin with protein. An example could be oatmeal with eggs and a piece of fruit.
4. Drink water all day long: this helps regulate your appetite and reduces your cravings.
5. When you have a craving, eat a serving of fruit paired with some of the healthy fats and proteins mentioned above: cheese, yogurt, nuts, nut butters. When you combine the fruit with the fat and the protein, you will get an extended release of the sugar your brain needs.
6. Keep a diary or journal about your cravings. If you routinely have cravings because you're stressed, find an enjoyable way that is also good for your body to manage that stress: take a walk, climb stairs. If you're bored, tend to your knitting, read a book or take a long, hot soak. Always distract yourself with something you enjoy.



## ***Sweets as Pleasure, not Addiction***

After about 3 weeks, have a sweet treat you enjoy once or twice a week. Do not make the mistake of keeping treats in the house. You will eat them—probably very quickly. Keep setting yourself up for success by making an occasion of these treats: share a slice of cheesecake and some fruit with your sweetie. Go to a nice little ice cream shop and have a cone of something you totally enjoy. Enjoy a really decadent something from your favorite bakery. And savor your treat: it's a delight for your mouth and a pleasure for your soul.

This sugar detox plan works for one simple reason. You're in control. This is the exact opposite of every deprivation diet you've ever been on. For many of us, those diets end with a binge that makes us feel physically sick because all that sugar's so hard on our body. And then we often feel disgusted, ashamed and out of control. If that's happened to you, now you know why.

## ***It's Not a Diet, It's Being Good to Your Body***

Everything about this sugar detox program is about being good to your body.

Here at the Trim Down Club, we are against restrictive dieting: calorie counting, deprivation, hunger, exhausting exercise. If you want to lose the weight that all this hidden sugar has forced

your body to gain, doing these things to yourself will probably not lead to long-term weight loss but probably will cause rebound weight gain.

Detoxing from sugar helps your body reset your metabolism and insulin response patterns so you can lose weight if you want to. When you start eating the right amounts of nourishing proteins, healthy fats and good carbs at the right times and in the right combinations, your body can shed weight like you've never experienced before.



### *Enjoying Great Food Without Spending Hours in the Kitchen*

The food and beverage industry spends billions trying to convince us that we can't live without their products, but that's not true. And while changing the way we eat can seem overwhelming at first, it gets much easier the more you do it—especially if you have help and support along the way.

The Trim Down Club offers that support and much more, with tons of great recipes, a fool-proof menu planner to take all the guesswork out (and give you the foods that you love), and all the information and tools you need to get the body you want and the health you deserve.

## 14 Tips to Manage Sugar Cravings



Food cravings are a normal part of life. Once in a while we're all 'in the mood' for something, whether it's crunchy, salty, savory, or sweet. Too often, however, food cravings can be heightened just when we need them the least: during our efforts toward weight loss. If food intake is restricted too much, or with high levels of exercise, the body perceives a 'threat' to survival, as if there's a famine. This can set one up not only for food cravings in general, but for sugar cravings in particular. The very act of restricting favorite foods and swearing off all treats – which dieters often do – can increase a sense of deprivation, and create a threat to self-control.

There are several reasons for this; if blood sugar drops too quickly, or is chronically low and a person is thus experiencing constant hunger, sugar and refined carbohydrates are often craved because they provide a quick source of energy. Over time, lower intakes of carbohydrates and protein can also affect the neurotransmitters in the brain affecting mood, which research suggests also plays a role in cravings, especially for sugar and sweeter-tasting foods.

Temptation to eat sweets, foods high in added sugars such as candy, sweetened beverages, and/or refined grain products (think 'white flour') such as cake, doughnuts, pastries, breads, bagels, sugary cereals etc., are common in those actively trying to lose weight because of these cravings. While it's true that these foods can temporarily increase blood glucose (sugar) levels, they lack staying power: blood sugar will decrease more quickly compared to after eating foods

that also have protein and fiber. Quick changes in blood sugar can increase cravings and the urge to eat, leading to a roller coaster of energy, mood, and hunger.

### *14 Tips to Manage Sugar Cravings and Balance Blood Sugar Levels*

**1. Eat regularly.**

Try to eat something every 3 to 4 hours. This will help to keep blood sugar levels more even. Portion sizes of meals and snacks should be individualized, based on energy requirements and personal goals.



**2. Don't skip breakfast.**

First thing in the morning, your blood sugar is already quite low, so you should avoid eating a 'carb heavy' or 'carb only' meal such as a bagel or toast with jam.

Instead, include foods that also contain protein and fiber. For example:

- Oatmeal with chopped almonds, milk, an egg, and a piece of fruit
- Organic soy or Greek yogurt, bran cereal, ground flax seeds, and fruit;
- 100% whole grain toast/bagel, natural peanut butter, double fruit/low-sugar jam, cheese, and whole fruit
- Even leftovers from dinner can work, e.g. chicken/beef or legumes, vegetables, and whole brown rice.

**3. Pack some protein.**

Whether you're at home, at the office or out and about during the day, be sure to include protein with your meals and snacks. It will help satiate you, keeping hunger (and cravings) at bay. Some examples of protein include:

- Eggs, milk, organic vegan or Greek yogurt, or dairy, nut, or fermented soy cheese
- Chickpeas, lentils, dried beans and peas, fermented or sprouted soy
- Beef, chicken, lamb, pork, turkey, fish, or game

**4. Sugar: out of sight, out of mind.**

It's difficult to snack on things that aren't there, so keep sugary snacks out of your house, car, office or purse. If going 'cold turkey' backfires, consider cutting back gradually: each time you give in to a craving, eat a little less or less often than the time before. Small changes can add up and eventually become new, healthier habits.

**5. Treat yourself.**

Allow yourself some sweets or treats a couple of times each week. Planned treats help to prevent a sense of deprivation, and reduce cravings and the risk for over-eating. What is considered an appropriate serving size will vary from person to person.



**6. Try a Substitute.**

When craving sugar, try eating a high-protein sweetened snack, such as yogurt, or high-fiber sweet such as a piece of fruit or small serving of dried fruit

instead of a nutrient-poor options like chocolate bars, candies, gummies, doughnuts etc. Sometimes even drinking a comforting beverage associated with sweets, such as tea, can calm a craving.

**7. Spice it up!**

Add spices to your foods like cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves to naturally sweeten them.

**8. Get enough sleep.**

When we're tired, we often use sugary foods for energy to counteract exhaustion.



**9. Knowledge is Power.**

Read labels, and use sources of added sugar in moderation to prevent the glucose spikes and drops that can lead to cravings. Remember that sugar goes by many names. (See [“So, where is all this sugar hiding?”](#) above.)

**10. Feelings, nothing more than feelings...**

Be mindful of emotional issues around your sugar cravings. Consider keeping a food diary to track your emotions and what you eat to learn to identify triggers for eating.

**11. Drink water.**

Often, what we think is a sugar/food craving is really thirst. Healthy tip: keep a water bottle with you to avoid dehydration!

**12. You can't fake it.**

Avoid artificial sweeteners, which may reduce satiety and increase sugar cravings.

**13. Distract yourself**

Most cravings last between 10 and 20 minutes, so if you can distract yourself, you can often wait out the craving. Go for a walk, answer email, put some laundry in the washer, read a magazine, or engage in a hobby. You'll be so much more productive, too!



**14. Keep your eyes on the prize.**

Remind yourself that not overindulging in unhealthy foods is more than a temporary tactic for weight loss, and is an investment in lifelong well-being.

## 6 Is Binge Eating a Disorder?

Do you sometimes feel like you can't control what you eat? Do you sometimes feel that you can't stop eating? Or do you sometimes eat to punish yourself or others?



If so, you may be binge eating, or even have developed binge eating disorder.

It might be easier to define first what it's not. It's not normal overeating like most of us do at celebrations and festive occasions. It's not a once-in-a-while indulgence in a pint of ice cream in front of a rom-com on TV. And it's not even the overeating that many people struggle with, thanks to highly processed "foods" that are carefully optimized with sugar, salt and fat to make us eat more of them.

Binge eating is something different, characterized by very specific behaviors.

### ***Do You Have Binge Eating Disorder?***

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you lose control over how much you eat?
- Are you distressed and disturbed by binge eating?
- Do you binge eat at least once a week?

If you answered these questions with “Yes,” you may want to go ahead and ask yourself:

- When bingeing, do you eat more rapidly than you normally would during that same time (for example, a 2-hour period)?
- Do you eat until you are uncomfortably or painfully full?
- Do you eat a lot of food when you’re not physically hungry?
- Do you eat alone or in secret because you’re embarrassed or ashamed of how much you eat?
- Do you feel disgusted, guilty or depressed after you’ve overeaten?



- yes
- no
- maybe

If you answered “Yes” to 3 or more of this second set of questions, you may have what DSM-V, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, defines as binge eating disorder. And you’re not alone. About 3.5% of women struggle with binge eating, as do 2% of men and 1.6% of adolescents.

### ***What Causes Binge Eating Disorder?***

There are 3 significant causes of binge eating disorder:

#### **Biological Causes**

Your hypothalamus, which is a part of your brain that controls appetite, may not be able to tell whether you’re hungry or satiated. You may not produce adequate amounts of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that stabilizes your mood. And you may have a genetic mutation that appears to play a role in compulsive overeating. But biology isn’t destiny...

#### **Psychological Causes**

When parents use food to comfort, reward, or dismiss their children, they create enormously unhealthy associations between the use of food and eating to manage emotion. This is a separate topic entirely, but suffice it to say that binge eating is the use of food to manage emotion, especially unpleasant emotions. Food won’t fire you, lie to you, cheat on you, or abuse you in any way. Food won’t mock you. Unfortunately, the relief provided by binge eating is only temporary, followed by feelings of guilt because you know that you are ultimately hurting your body and your health.

#### **Social Causes**

Emotional issues are compounded by the intense and unrealistic pressure we face to be conventionally attractive. A common trigger for binge eating disorder is restrictive, severe dieting in an attempt to meet those unrealistic expectations, even if the person is eating

“healthy.” You can eat so healthy, it’s unhealthy for you. Sometimes we just need to eat things because we enjoy them, regardless of whether they’re “good” for us.

### *Is Binge Eating an Addictive Behavior?*

The food industry hates this question, even though they have spent huge amounts of money to develop foods that produce neurochemical responses that are virtually identical to addiction. Salt, sugar and fat are very carefully used to make mood addictive, enabling us eat tremendous amounts, such as a whole bag of chips, in one sitting, even though a mini-bag of chips would satisfy us just the same. Why? Because you lose the ability to appreciate their taste after the first few bites.



And sugar is truly addictive. Sugar triggers the same receptors inside our brains that cocaine does. In fact, rats in laboratory studies tend to prefer sweet rewards, such as sugar, to cocaine. And the more sugar you eat, the more you must eat to enjoy it the same. Trying to reduce the sugar in your diet can lead to acute cravings—or withdrawal symptoms, a classic sign of addiction.

### *Overcoming Binge Eating Disorder*

The first thing you have to do is love yourself and love your body enough to be willing to understand why you are binge eating, then develop a healthier relationship with food and your body. This is easier said than done for many people. If you feel overwhelmed, please seek professional help. If you just need some motivation to help you through, here are some of our best tips to overcome binge eating:

- **Keep a Food Diary.** It can help you understand not only what and how often you’re eating, but also why you’re eating. Use it to understand what triggers your binges.
- **Don’t “Diet”.** Dieting is about restriction and deprivation, and it frequently does significant harm to your body and psyche. Instead, eat nourishing foods, in nourishing portions that satisfy you, not stuff you. And make sure to allow yourself your favorite treats at least once in a while.
- **Feed Yourself.** Be sure to eat three healthy meals composed of high-fiber vegetables and fruit, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats, every day. Between meals, have healthy snacks. Eat scheduled meals and snacks on time, because you are much more likely to binge when you’re hungry.
- **Avoid Temptation.** Remove your favorite binge foods from your home, car and workplace. How to reconcile this with “Don’t diet?” After due consideration, you

may decide you have to cut ice cream entirely out of your life—but rich dark chocolate doesn't push the same buttons in your head. So enjoy that. Alternatively, if keeping ice cream at home seems impossible, but going out and having some at a restaurant lets you treat yourself in moderation, do it that way.

- **Remember: Sugar is a Drug.** This is probably the key to avoiding both deprivation and temptation. Sugar and refined carbs flip very specific neurobiological switches in your body. You may find it extremely helpful to sharply limiting your intake of them.
- **Control Your Stress.** This means, get enough sleep and exercise. Meditation, yoga and breathing exercises are also excellent ways to manage stress. It is enormously important to be able to face painful emotions without using food. If you are dealing with significant trauma, you may need to seek professional help.
- **Get Enough Sleep.** Most adults need 8 to 9 hours a night. Remove electronics from your bedroom and don't use them for about an hour before going to bed. Sleep helps you cope with stress and stabilizes your energy levels so you're not turning to sugar and refined carbs for a hit of energy.
- **Get Enough Exercise.** You should be doing at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise a day, and you should feel good about doing it. Exercise doesn't just help you control your stress, it helps you appreciate your body's strength and stamina and beauty.
- **Get a Hobby.** If you find yourself eating out of boredom, you need to develop a hobby. It can be as simple as taking walks with friends, gardening, knitting or reading. Find ways to entertain and amuse yourself that do not involve food—and that includes laughing at the food advertising on TV. Often, diverting yourself from eating for just a few minutes can derail a binge.
- **Get Support.** If you suffer from binge eating, it's very important not to try to go it alone. It is an addictive behavior, and just like any other addiction, you benefit from drawing on the strength of others. Your local chapter of OA (Overeaters Anonymous) may be extremely helpful to you. In particular, they may be able to refer you to qualified local therapists.



## 7 Conclusion

As you see, cravings are not impossible to resist when you have the right techniques for coping with them. Once you can recognize the difference between a simple craving and true hunger and understand the root cause behind your cravings, you can address them directly using one of the many techniques described in this guide.

Now you can take control so that temptations don't get the better of you. Instead, you can enjoy your favorite treats in a way that both satisfies you, and keeps your health goals on track.

Remember, the Trim Down Club is always here for you to help conquer your cravings. Reach out to other members through our forums and groups to get ideas and techniques for coping with cravings, and to share your own success stories. We love to hear them!

