



10 FOODS THAT CONTAIN ADDICTIVE INGREDIENTS

Posted on December 9, 2021 by Mindy

When people hear about addiction, they often relate it to drug or alcohol abuse. But, there is another type of addiction and that is to food. This, in itself, comes in two forms. One is where an individual cannot stop eating and the second occurs when you “crave” certain foods. This craving is very similar to the one that any addict experiences. The reason for this “craving” comes from how food works with the brain. Many highly processed, sugary, and/or high-fat foods turn on the pleasure center in the brain. So if you are feeling down or depressed, these foods can give you a lift in mood. The better you feel, the more you “crave” that food that made you feel better. This is the basic cycle to any addiction.

Below are 10 foods that contain addictive ingredients. While some of them may not surprise you, others may have you scratching your head so the ingredients that make it addictive will also be covered.

Chocolate

There are three types of chocolate. This includes dark, milk, and white chocolate. Now, dark chocolate is not addictive. On the other hand, milk and white chocolate can stimulate that addictive behavior. Ok, you may be wondering why. Both of these types of chocolate are chopped full of sugar and fat. These substances provide a dopamine fix, which makes you feel good. This good feeling can then become an addiction to this food.

Healthy alternative: While you can simply use dark chocolate for any recipe that calls for chocolate, you can also use a chocolate substitute called carob. This ingredient is sweeter than milk or white chocolate. When using carob in recipes, make sure to cut the sugar listed in the recipe by 25 percent.

Related: [Homemade Adaptogenic Bars With Ashwagandha](#)

Chips

Oh, who does not enjoy a nice salty chip with a soft drink or beer? Well, what makes chips so delicious is what also makes them addictive. Chips are both high in fat and salt. Both of these substances trigger the dopamine response. This reward response then makes you crave more chips.

Healthy alternative: Since the fat and salt are what make chips additive, why not keep the crunch without all the bad stuff by using fresh vegetable “chips in place of store-bought chips. Consider carrots, rounds of zucchini, and discs of cucumbers along with a homemade salsa dip or hummus.

Related: [Healthy Pringles: The Nutritious Leaves That Make Crispy Chips](#)

Cookies

You know the saying, “you cannot eat just one.” This is very true when it comes to cookies. Regardless of the type, they are full of sugar and fat. This is compounded when you add ingredients such as chocolate. Cookies then become a snowball that turns on the pleasure center in the brain and before you know it you have eaten all those freshly baked cookies that you made for your kid's bake sale.

Healthy alternative: To reduce the amount of fat, you can substitute with applesauce or vegan butter in the recipe. When it comes to sugar, your choices can be a bit tricky. Using applesauce in place of fat is a wonderful way of reducing the amount of sugar since the applesauce is sweet by nature. Using dried fruits such as raisins is another healthy way of reducing sugar. While I know that not every cookie recipe will welcome raisins in place of some sugar, there are natural sweeteners that can be used in place of granulated sugar. This includes stevia and yacon syrup.

Related: [10 Natural Sweeteners and Sugar Alternatives](#)

Ice Cream

Nothing beats a refreshing dip of ice cream in a bowl or cone but this can also become a problem. What causes this addiction is the high fat, dairy, and sugar that makes ice cream so delicious. Using non-dairy, low-fat, and/or low in sugar ice cream does not reduce the addiction if you get pleasure from it. Looking for a way of increasing the addiction then add chocolate and chocolate syrup along with sprinkles and you a full-blown dopamine trigger, which is going to make you feel really good.

Healthy alternative: A simple substitute for ice cream is homemade pops that are made from flavored water and/or fruit. Utilizing these ingredients can create unlimited flavors to meet your ice cream cravings without the fat, dairy, and/or sugar. [Avocado Ice-Cream](#) is another healthy option.

Related: [Anti-Inflammatory Turmeric Ice Cream](#)

Cheese

You may be surprised to know that cheese is addictive and healthy at the same time. The saying, “a little bit will do you” is true when it comes to this food. Now, the source of the addiction comes from two sources. One is the fat content of the cheese, which can satisfy a “craving” for fatty foods. The second part of this puzzle is a protein called casein. When you consume cheese, your body breaks down casein into casomorphins. This, in turn, attaches itself to dopamine receptors in the brain, which increases the chances that you will crave more cheese to get your fix.

Healthy alternative: If you love cheese but do not like the possible addictive nature of this food then you can consider soy cheese, cashew cheese, tahini or hummus. While they don't taste the same, they can be wonderful addition to a sandwich or on crackers for an afternoon snack.

French Fries

Yes, I know you are shaking your head at this point and going no not French fries but the truth is the salt that makes them so tasty also makes them addictive.

Healthy alternative: When coming up with a healthier choice, consider a baked potato with salsa.

Related: [Why Healing a Leaky Gut Should be a Top Priority for Health](#) (Learn More)

Cheeseburgers

Well, if I do say so myself, the cheeseburger is one great way of combining all the bad stuff is a delicious dish. Nothing can beat the oozing, melted cheese running off the edges of a hamburger along with the trails of grease dripping off the meat and bun. While this sounds so delightful right now, keep in mind that this humble dish is full of fat, sugar, and salt. All these ingredients will knock on the door of your pleasure center and encourage you to eat more.

Healthy alternative: When it comes to a healthy substitute for this addictive food, start with the meat. Fixing your cheeseburger with ground turkey, chicken, bison, or vegetable patties is a great way of reducing that addictive fat. You can also top your cheeseburger with vegan cheese instead. This cheese melts just like dairy cheese and no one will notice the difference.

Non-diet Soda

While soda is a generic term for this particular drink, all soft drinks have sugar. As we have discussed, sugar triggers that happy feeling but many sodas have another ingredient and that is caffeine. Yes, caffeine can keep you awake but it can also become addictive. If you do not believe this, test this idea by going off all caffeinated beverages. You will quickly develop a pounding head that will remind you of the effects of caffeine.

Healthy alternative: Looking for a way of reducing your sugar and being able to have a non-diet soda? Well, if the answer is yes then consider making your own. There are many recipes online for healthy homemade sodas and kombucha. While this may take a bit of trial and error, once you have honed into your recipe you will find that you do not miss the non-diet soda.

- [How to Make Medicinal Kombucha at Home](#)
- [Ancient Japanese Tonic Melts 54 LBS Of Fat - Drink Daily Before 10 AM](#) (Video)

Cakes

Cake, the simple cake, and who knew it was hiding so much. In a nutshell, the fat and sugar are what make this delicious dish so addictive. Now add some chocolate and you have a dopamine trigger all in a mouth-watering slice.

Healthy alternative: When it comes to a healthy choice for cake, the picks are slim. One approach is to make your cake yourself. In this way, you can control the fat and sugar level. To control the fat, you can add egg whites and oils that are lower in fat. Another approach is to substitute the oil (fat) for applesauce or prunes that have been processed in a blender along with water to create a slurry.

Sugar is another issue but you can cut some of the sugar out by using the fat substitute described above. Another area of a cake where you can remove sugar comes from the icing that we all love. In place of this fat and sugar-filled topping, add cut fruit to the top of your cake and now you can have your cake and eat it too.

Related: [How to Stop Sugar Cravings Naturally](#)

Pizza

Oh no, pizza is addictive. Why, yes it is. To understand this, let's take it apart. Most pizza crusts have salt and sugar. The tomato sauce also has sugar. When you add meat, well, you have now added fat and top that with cheese, now you have a volcano of triggers that can make you happy. To keep the good times rolling; you will want to consume more pizza.

Healthy alternative: If you want to reduce the possibility of pizza addiction then you will need to reduce the number of additive ingredients. To reduce the fatty meats, choose to limit the meats or completely remove them and go for a vegetable pizza. When it comes to sugar in the crust and tomato sauce, select a thin-crust pizza, cauliflower crust or make your pizza on zucchini slices and use only homemade tomato sauce to control the sugar in that ingredient.

Another part of this dark dietary picture is the fact that while you can eat the same amount of all these foods, the pleasure you receive will diminish. This will then drive you to eat more so that you can get that happy feeling again.

So now that you know about the addictive nature of food, what should you do? Well first, do not think the approach is to give all these foods up. Eliminating these will help but other foods have sugar naturally, like peas or apple, as an example. The best approach is to understand the addiction and eat mindfully while you enjoy these yummy foods.

You may also like:

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[3 Fat Burning Plants You Aren't Eating Right Now](#)

Eat This to Fertilize Your Gut

Comments



Jeanette - 2022-04-17 23:13:13

I agree about soy being harmful & haven't eaten it for almost 20 years, since having breast cancer. A couple of companies make non soy versions of soy sauce, which we purchase from Sprouts store. For me, as a diabetic, dates & cashews are out of the question, as they affect my blood sugar. I use walnuts, sunflower seeds or other nuts. I am planning to make some of your 'bar' recipes, but using diabetic & keto friendly sweeteners. If necessary to thicken, I may add protein or whey powder. Thank you for your information & recipes. Jeanette



Heather - 2022-04-14 13:32:30

It seems everyone has a strong opinion against soy products. I agree that most soy is GMO and very bad; however, if you buy organic, non-GMO soybeans and sprout them those are fantastic. Check out the research before you are so quick to regurgitate what everyone else is saying about it. The right type of soy has protective properties against breast cancer actually. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26006245/>



The Lost Herbs - 2022-02-09 12:59:10

Hi Jad, Thank you for your kind words. It brings us great joy to hear that our articles can be helpful and we're delighted that you were able to find what you were looking for. Have a good time in the woods :)



Grama+Pei - 2021-12-27 06:36:59

Remember the Lay's Potato chip ad from our childhood, "Betchs cant eat just one..."? Yeah. one of the most addictive additives to nearly ANY mass-produced ingestible, is an excitotoxin called MSG. (monosodium Glutamate) AKA "free glutamic acid, AKA 'natural flavoring' or 'natural flavors' or Glutamic Acid, (dont worry, I will swing back around to the potato chip) very often 'malt' and hidden under many, many names. The FDA heard the argument that it should be OK to put that poison into foods, so that seniors, who can be known for their suppressed appetites, would WANT to eat. MSG and all its psudonames is an odorless, flavorless drug that over-excites the brain if/while its being ingested, causing the victim/eater to not want to stop eating, as it suppresses the body's recognition of the feeling of fullness. I suspect that it is also added to salt and to sugar. I am allergic to MSG. Many people are. I cant eat processed white sugar, (aka bleached sugar or bleached flour or even bleached, finely ground table salt. I suspect msg is being added as a flow or non-caking agent) MSG is a HUGE money-maker for food corps, but the 'toxin' aspect of it is a horrible way to kill brain cells. It does not just make one fat with its gluttonous addiction. It destroys brain cells. The book "Excitotoxins, The Taste That Kills", by Dr Russell M. Blaylock is an excellent book, and can teach us all about how to avoid it. You see, the FDA does not mandate that a substance that is ADDED to a food for a purpose that is not in the actual recipe for the food does not need to be declared on a label. Stuff like anticaking agents, drying agents, and etc, are not stiffly regulated, or they WERE not the last time I researched it. Lays Potato Chips, as well as foods such as Campbells Soups contain MSG, as do many, many other edibles. Watch out for it. Its WAY deadlier and damaging than the current bug-of-the-year is.



David - 2021-12-13 19:45:32

Hear, hear, PD!



David - 2021-12-13 19:43:33

We were surprised by soy. We substituted soy for cows' milk. When our youngest son got to be about 12-15 months, he joined the rest of us in consuming soy. He was still wetting his bed at 7, but we realized that was only after he had eaten soy milk ice cream or other soy products. As soon as we cut out the soy, he remained dry, dispelling any concerns about his emotional or developmental health.



Grandma Peg - 2021-12-11 16:23:35

Gluten free goes a long way to restore gut health and need have nothing to do with the cause of weight loss. Also substituting cane sugar with stevia or monk fruit by looking up its substitutional amounts will satisfy sugar cravings as will raw honey. I allow sweet n low because it's a well proven ok substitute of saccharine. Not sure of alcohol sugars. The substitute flours used in recipes can be adapted to easily and some will satisfy wheat cravings with tasting the many varieties used world wide instead of wheat. even soy sauce contains wheat but there is a wheat free soy sauce that can be tried if there's not a strong reaction to soy proteins.....once in awhile. Soy protein is the one that 'gets us' in trouble. Many foods have soy lecithin in them and that is a freeze dried soy oil that many can get by with because there's no soy protein in it. Ghee is a good substitute for butter and most guaranteed to be milk protein free. It is almost an oil so special recipes for baking needed. Tho is doesn't taste the same, the coconut oils can be a great substitute ..but wouldn't recommend coconut butter. It has a drying quality and can choke you..to death ...literally. As for substitute cheeses, there is no substitute that tastes even remotely like cheese. It's true that the grass fed animal products are the best to try if your second meat is cheese. Everything like that is expensive and so a lot of people can't afford everything to be organic ..sad but true fact. As for salt, those who consistently eat fast food take outs may be getting too much salt but the national surveys prove that Americans are greatly lacking a needed salt intake.,,that's why Electrolyte waters were invented and made public. Read up on that subject. And I agree,,we need some healthy fats and even some saturated fats are healthy..like those from coconuts as our brains are made of saturated fats. The coconut oils are not the villains certain manufacturers like to make out that they are. Research that online. We do need the kind of fats our body assimilates and uses. That do not collect in or destroy the blood vessels and heart. I also agree, this article is not healthy and pushes soy too much as if they're involved in the soy industry. It sounds as if it was written by a newly employed teenager.



Carol McGrath - 2021-12-10 18:46:54

Sorry, I forgot to attach the link to my comment about The New Yorker article...
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/11/15/the-great-organic-food-fraud>



Carol McGrath - 2021-12-10 18:44:34

A recent New Yorker article that shows much soy labelled organic ISN'T!



PD - 2021-12-10 18:28:16

If you check casein in Wikipedia, the first thing they say is it is a component of milk, not of meat. Human milk is 60%ish casein, while cows milk is around 80%+.



Angella - 2021-12-10 17:31:30

We are on a whole foods plant based diet and eat soy at least twice a week and my husband and sons have no evidence of "Moobs" - going strong on soy for decades. The problem with soy is the interaction with animal products and use of processed versions of this whole food. Some people have problems with some foods - so it goes - I know someone allergic to pineapple and yet it has bromelain that helps treat infections and inflammation . That does not make the food bad. The GMO soy is used in industrial work and not intended for animal or human consumption. Not to say I trust everything marketing tells me. I understand the bad rep soy has. I used to see it that way as well. One day I had an epiphany with the thought that Asia has a high use of soy and they do not have "Moobs" or even the equivalent rate of western diseases until they began consuming the western diet. The same way tomatoes and potatoes are getting a bad rep as nightshades but they are used widely in europe without problems until the westernization of their diet.



Bill L. - 2021-12-10 12:34:44

I'm saddened and alarmed that ANYONE would believe, let alone recommend, Soy in a diet. Especially GMO Soy ! The last thing women need is a PROVEN cancer causing ingredient in their diet and the last thing that men need is to grow "Man Boobs" from the Phytoestrogen. Something else people don't talk about enough is the estrogenic properties in the plastic water bottles and milk containers. We cut all that out years ago. The FDA should ban that crap.



Marshall - 2021-12-10 08:50:33

If I enjoy eating it, it's bad for me. If I don't enjoy eating it, it's good for me. And of course, it requires forced self-effort (a.k.a. "willpower") to correct our faulty diets. I just cannot help making this observation.



Yvonne - 2021-12-10 07:12:47

I have to agree with the anti-soy faction. I was told years ago that my body produced more estrogen than most people. I was warned to avoid soy completely! I have just had the "braca" genetic test and am waiting to hear the results. (I know that isn't spelled correctly) No soy for me. I've had a total hysterectomy, so no soy worries there any more (no cancer either, hurrah!). If the genetic test is not good news, I will consider doing an Angelina Jolie. Then I might eat a little bit of soy once in a while!



John M Schmidt - 2021-12-10 04:21:55

Yes, soy is GMO for most soy and has other issues stated above and the best substitute I know is almond cheese which many pizza places use here in Chiang Mai, Thailand



Lori Smith - 2021-12-10 03:52:13

I highly recommend you read the book "The Whole Soy Story" by Dr. Kaayla Daniel (not a typo- that is how she spells her name) as it is very well-written and very scientific. In this book she reveals all the problems with soy and why it should be avoided like the plague unless it is fermented. Soy NOT a good food source. Sorry, there is also nothing wrong with the fat in hamburger. Saturated fats are healthy and good for you. Grass-fed beef is especially healthy. What is not healthy and causes heart issues is vegetable oils of all kinds. I eat mainly low-carb, avoid sugar, highly-processed foods, and 'junk' food. will stick to my meats, eggs, cheeses, and natural fats, thank you. Not only have I lost weight and maintained the loss. but I feel great and do not feel like I am missing anything in life. My one cheat food is pizza parlor pizza once a month- love it! Healthy? Perhaps not, but since I only eat it once a month- it is my cheat food. Had a physical and my Dr. could not believe how well my numbers came back- I am healthy as a horse and on zero medications. Not bad for a 62 year old!



Robert - 2021-12-10 03:43:51

Absolutely! Thank you.



Terri - 2021-12-10 03:38:09

Yes moderation . I'm dairy , gluten, and corn free. Soy ice cream is my one pleasure.. I've had no side effects as in the previous items.. it's called Moderation! Also, I'm impost menopausal. FYI



Michelle Mahone - 2021-12-10 03:33:17

Sourdough baking has been a game changer at our house and solves much. I can't agree that soy should be used at all given it is genetically-modified and a toxin that causes a cascade of effects, which have already been well-captured by others. I feel a lot better without soy in my diet and I don't bake anything without sourdough. Cookies are amazing with sourdough-the fermentation causes superb caramelization, and I use all-natural ingredients. I'm the same size I was in High School-newly this year—and it is because this year I cut out the GMOs, I use sourdough, and have eaten A LOT of grass-fed beef, cheese, butter and eggs. I have never felt better and my body is ripped like never before. I would have called me crazy years ago but then again, you can't argue with results.



Marla - 2021-12-10 02:21:08

Several generations of babies have been raised on soy formula, I believe this has caused a great disturbance in the human development.



crazysquirrel - 2021-12-10 02:21:01

Soy can also promote 'moobs' aka MAN BOOBS.



Wendy - 2021-12-10 02:02:29

Soy? Really? This discredits almost all your work. I've noticed so many false statements for true health. And fats are needed for a healthy brain. I'm living proof.



John L. Moesche - 2021-12-09 23:57:56

Garfield said, that a pizza is not a pizza, unless it's got anchovies.



Angelique Vantoux - 2021-12-09 23:10:49

I agree. I can't eat soy at all. Does not agree with me one bit. As soon as I eat something with soy, I immediately have a reaction. I am half French so don't ask me to stop eating MY cheese. Moderation in ALL things. Too much of ANYTHING is bad for you.



Kat - 2021-12-09 21:38:54

Organic plant estrogens are not dangerous, but animal products are pumped full of synthetic hormones and gut-killing antibiotics!



Kat - 2021-12-09 21:33:17

Dairy and meat contain the protein casein, a known carcinogen.



Kat - 2021-12-09 21:32:09

You may want to check out the research by Michael Greger MD, in How Not to Die, about breast cancer survival and organic soy.



Janet Bullock - 2021-12-09 21:01:43

I respectfully disagree about using soy, and about eliminating fat. My functional medicine resources urge the moderate use of good fats (e.g. organic extra-virgin olive oil, organic avocado oil).



Linda - 2021-12-09 20:00:55

Agree totally...avoid soy at all costs..it's one of the worse foods to consume and very gmo'd.....lost herbs has a lot good info, but certainly some of it is not up to date.....absolutely no soy anything...garbage food



MillieK - 2021-12-09 19:26:41

Soy? Uh - uh. I am really surprised that you are recommending anything soy. Soybean oil is one of the very worst things (for your health) you can use in the kitchen. I am really disappointed that you are touting soy beans anything, as healthy!



Cecelia - 2021-12-09 17:36:25

The increase in Soy alternatives in foods is a question mark for sure. Phyto estrogens are present in soy products and buy products, adding Phyto estrogens (plant based estrogens) into foods increases surplus estrogen and may NOT be a good idea for developing children particularly adding estrogen in developing girls forcing census earlier and for developing boys and men. Estrogens affect the endocrine system and estrogens impact perm production in men. If you're thinking of conceiving, food source estrogens have impact over time in everyone and may NOT be healthy. Flooding a growing child with estrogen is a hijack of the endocrine system and will alter their natural development over time. Additionally, surplus estrogens circulating in the system may not be a good idea for those suffering from, or on the verge of estrogen sensitive illness, i.e., ovarian cystic disease, breast tumors (benign or not). etc. Think it through, if you do decide to flood your foods with a disruptive estrogen source that may not be a productive choice for child or adult.



Robyn - 2021-12-09 17:25:36

Surprised and disappointed to see you recommending soy. I avoid it for several reasons. I was told by my naturopath (and many other alternative health sources) to avoid soy due to thyroid inhibiting properties and hormone disruption in addition to damaging fatty acids. Almost all soy has been genetically modified to withstand heavy pesticide use. Even most organic versions of soy are GMO. Personally, I even go so far as seeking out eggs and chickens who have NOT been fed soy and corn. There is increasing awareness of the hazards of soy and surprised you are recommending—as I do value many of your other recommendations and love your book. Would much rather hazard organic cheese or even conventional cheese over soy. Moderation is key.



Richard Hanson - 2021-12-09 16:51:28

Soy is horrible to your health and is NOT a healthy alternative for cheese. If you eat cheese from grass fed cows it's good for you. Healthy fat.



Susan Nobles - 2021-12-09 16:49:23

I have to respectfully disagree on using soy anything. There are more people allergic to soy beans than peanuts for one. Secondly, most soy is GMO, non-organic from China, not good for anyone. Then there are people like me who are breast cancer thrivers who cannot eat soy without endangering our health because it contains phytoestrogens. Soy is not for everyone and those who do eat it are doing so at their own risk.



Jad Wolf - 2021-12-09 16:13:06

i really do think you guys have a lotta good info. perfect for me as i will be in a cabin in the woods...going off grid...thanks for what you do.