

Brain Chemistry, Sugar Cravings and Binge Eating

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**“I’m on a low-carb diet.
Whenever I feel low, I eat carbs!”**

Physical

Dopamine

Deficiency - Loss of energy, fatigue, blood sugar instability, carbohydrate cravings, diabetes, hypoglycemia, obesity, slow metabolism, depression, worthlessness, pleasure-seeking behavior, stress intolerance, substance abuse, sugar cravings, social isolation, lack of follow thru, procrastination.

GABA

Deficiency - GABA is the major inhibitory neurotransmitter in the brain, which keeps all the other biochemicals in check. GABA controls the brain rhythm so that you function mentally and physically at a steady pace. When your rhythm is thrown off by GABA deficiency, you may begin to feel anxious, nervous or irritable. carbohydrate cravings, decreased libido, excessive sleepiness, insomnia, protein cravings, problems adjusting to stress, anxiety, depression, worthlessness, emotional immaturity, OCD, phobias, rage, restlessness, high anxiety, impulsive errors (jumping the gun, erratic driving).

Serotonin

Deficiency - Carbohydrate cravings, drug or alcohol addiction, hypersensitivity, excessive sleep, insomnia, salt cravings, weight gain, codependent, depersonalization, depression, impulsiveness, lack of pleasure, social isolation, OCD, paranoia, perfectionism, rage, self absorption.

How Are Neurotransmitters Depleted?

- Mental stress and anger
- Doing too many things and keeping busy all day long
- Pain - emotional and physical
- Low blood sugar, hypoglycemia, not enough calories, skipping meals
- Alcohol, drugs
- Lack of sleep
- Over-exercising
- Lack of sunshine
- Artificial sweeteners
- Sugar

Nutrition recommendations to support optimal brain chemistry:

1. Keep blood sugar balanced - consider taking alpha lipoic acid, chromium and/or cinnamon.
2. Eat a nutritious, high protein breakfast every day - have smaller meals throughout the day, avoid refined carbohydrates and simple sugars.
3. Plan ahead. Bring protein snacks with you.
4. Eliminate artificial sugars.
5. Explore hidden food allergies.
6. Get adequate sleep.
7. Get direct sunlight or use a light box.
8. Supplement with fish oil.
9. Other supplements to consider: Vitamin D, L-Glutamine, 5HTP or SAME, Inositol, Calcium, Magnesium, Zinc, B-Complex (especially folic acid), GABA, Melatonin.

If your sugar cravings and insatiable sweet tooth continually sabotage your weight loss try this.

10. "People who ate chocolate the most frequently, despite eating more calories and exercising no differently from those who ate the least chocolate, tended to have lower B.M.I.'s. There was a difference of roughly five to seven pounds between subjects who ate five servings of chocolate a week and those who ate none." ~Dr. Golomb

Note: a serving equals 1-2 squares of 70% (or higher) dark chocolate, or 1-2 teaspoons of unsweetened cocoa powder.

"We make our craving control cocoa drink by mixing 1 tablespoon of unsweetened cocoa powder in hot water (pour water on top of cocoa slowly while stirring to avoid clumping). You can also add any non-calorie sweetener (our favorites are stevia, xylitol and erythritol) as well as cinnamon, cayenne and/or other spices to taste. To get the best benefit of cocoa it should be taken alone and not mixed into foods, protein powders or milk." – Jade Teta Naturopathic Doctor

Resources:

The Edge Effect Eric Braverman M.D.

The Amen Solution: The Brain Healthy Way To Get Thinner, Smarter, and Happier
Daniel Amen M.D.

The End of Overeating: Taking Control of The Insatiable American Appetite - David Kessler M.D.

UC Berkley Video - Food Addiction <http://vimeo.com/27022110#>

Healthy Discoveries Blog Post: Eat Dark Chocolate: Stop Your Cravings -

www.healthydiscoveries.com

Emotions

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size: A lifetime of happiness	
Servings Per Container: An infinite amount	
Amount Per Serving	As Served
Limitless	
<small>% Daily Value</small>	
This product contains the main ingredients needed to be content and happy in this life.	
Practice Areas	
Self-acceptance	16.6%
Self-love	16.6%
Self-forgiveness	16.6%
Compassion	16.6%
Love your body	16.6%
Smile, laugh and love	16.6%
Commitment to:	
Being a good friend	100%
Staying true to yourself	100%
Accepting what you can't change	100%
Self-hate and self-loathing	0%
Daily percentages are based on what is needed to live a happy and emotionally healthy life	
<small>http://theloveyourselfchallenge.tumblr.com/</small>	

Emotional (Often Unconscious) Reasons For Binging

Stuffing
Protecting
Grounding

What are you hungry for?
What are you craving?
What's eating you?
What are you feeding that's not feeding you in return?

Resources

Journal Therapy

Writing to Heal: A Guided Journal For Recovering From Trauma & Emotional Upheaval
James Pennebaker PhD

Writing Down Your Soul: How to Activate and Listen to the Extraordinary Voice Within
Janet Conner

With Pen In Hand: The Healing Power of Writing
Henriette Anne Klauser PhD

Body Work/Energy Therapies

Yoga

Yoga for Stress Reduction DVD - Hala Khouri

Overcoming Yoga Through Trauma: Reclaiming Your Body - David Emerson

EFT (emotional freedom technique)

Bach Flower Remedies- Healthy Discoveries.com (search Bach Flowers for emotional health)

Meditation

Good Bye Worries CD and Sleep Solutions by Roberta Shapiro

Cognitive Behavior Therapy

Other:

Institute For The Psychology Of Eating - Boulder, CO

The Gift of Our Compulsions: A Revolutionary Approach to Self-Acceptance and Healing
Mary O'Malley

Eating In The Light Of The Moon: How Women Can Transform Their Relationship With Food Through Myths, Metaphors & Storytelling
Anita Johnston PhD.

Normal Eating

Normal eating is being able to eat when you are hungry and continue eating until you are satisfied. It is being able to choose food you like and eat it and truly get enough of it – not just eating because you think you should.

Normal eating is being able to use some moderate constraint in your food selection to get the right food, but not being so restrictive that you miss out on pleasurable foods.

Normal eating is giving yourself permission to eat sometimes because you are happy, sad or bored, or just because it feels good!

Normal eating is three meals a day, most of the time, but it can also be choosing to munch along. It is leaving some cookies on the plate because you know you can have some again tomorrow, or it is eating more now because they taste so wonderful and are fresh.

Normal eating is over eating at times; feeling stuffed and uncomfortable. It is also under eating at times and wishing you had more.

Normal eating is trusting your body to make up for your mistakes in eating.

Normal eating takes up some of your time and attention, but keeps its place as only one important area of your life.

*In short **normal eating is flexible**. It **varies** in response to your emotions, your **schedule**, your **hunger**, and your **proximity to food**.*

How to Get Your Kids To eat: But Not Too Much - Ellyn Satter

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FOR
EVERYTHING
TO BE PERFECT.

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- makingthingshappen.com -

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