

# The Sweet Tooth Trap

By Dr. Theresa Tsingis

There's a dangerous trap that many of us fall for each year. It's the recurring trap of overeating and weight gain, followed by guilt and New Year's resolutions. This is the time of year when those traps are set. Cooler temperatures and more indoor activities cause many of us to seek comfort foods that seem so compelling to have during the winter months.

While the pattern of overindulgence can be tempting, there are ways to balance healthy eating with the desire for favorite calorie-laden foods. Here are seven strategies to avoid falling prey to entrapment.

First, be fussy. Chances are you're discriminatory in areas, so apply that diplomacy to food. Splurge only on high-quality chocolate, for example. Thoroughly savor your indulgences and take your time, so that your brain can register the pleasure and signal your stomach to ease up. Also, being fussy about what to indulge on prevents blowing calories on low quality junk food that's typ-

ically devoid of good taste and nutrition.

Second, remember that there will always be a next meal – and a next, and so on. That large piece of pie that you're deciding to consume could be split in half and the second portion eaten a few hours later.

Third, schedule eating the way you do any daily activity. Plan your day carefully and avoid eating on the run. There are a few advantages to planning ahead. Eating regularly prevents overeating at the end of the day when resolve is low and fatigue is high. Scheduling some indulgences for other times can help you refrain from consuming a coworker's baked goods at the office during the day.

Fourth, use your head to fool your brain. Avoid large place settings. Research has shown that if your eyes view food on a salad plate or wine in a smaller glass, the brain adjusts appetite and satiety levels accordingly. You will tend to eat and drink less, but feel just

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as satisfied. Try it – it works!

Fifth, run around even more than you already are. As in, literally run or quicken the pace of your exercise routine. Studies show that inserting rapid-speed intervals into a regular exercise routine helps to burn the dangerous fat around the midsection.

Finally, think like a good horseback rider. If you fall off a balanced eating approach, just get back onto a healthier eating routine again at your next meal. Don't perpetuate a cycle of overeating, punishment, deprivation, and overeating. Give yourself a break and try the gift of self-kindness this season.



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