

All About Food Cravings

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Do you often long for salty potato chips or sweet chocolate? People tend to crave non-nutritious foods that are high in salt, sugar or fat (or a combination).

Can cravings be explained? Some researchers have hypothesized that we want foods that contain nutrients our body lacks, but science has not fully supported this. Instead, cravings are likely the result of a blend of factors including:

- High stress.
- Lack of sleep, which can affect hormone levels.
- Forbidding oneself from eating certain foods.
- Associations (such as craving popcorn during a movie).
- Hormonal changes.
- Emotions — such as sadness, which may lead to emotional eating.
- Thirst or dehydration.



To combat cravings, start by eating meals that contain enough protein to make you feel full. Studies show that adequate protein (about 20 to 30 grams per meal) can decrease cravings by up to 60%. Also make sure to stay well hydrated by drinking water all day long.

If cravings pop up when you're sleep deprived or stressed, try incorporating better lifestyle habits, such as turning off devices an hour before bedtime.

Deprivation doesn't work for many people, who prefer to enjoy a small portion of what they crave. Does this sound like you? If so, enjoy your favorite food mindfully. That means you eat a reasonable portion to satisfy the craving, and savor every delicious bite with all of your senses.



Get in the Swim

Water exercise offers special rewards. First, no matter what the activity involves, doing it in chest-deep water takes added effort. And low-impact aqua workouts can leave you feeling calm and invigorated, not tired or achy.

Fitness benefits? Even the simplest pool exercise — walking forward and backward in waist-high water — can improve balance and flexibility and train your core muscles, all with help from the water's resistance. Aqua aerobic routines will help you reduce body fat, lose weight and strengthen your cardiovascular health.

Pool classes offer a variety of exercise options. In addition to lap swimming, you can switch to shallow or deep-water activities that provide vigorous muscle workouts, especially by keeping your full range of motion under water.

Just starting or have limited mobility? Choose an introductory class and work with the instructor to identify your fitness goals and to learn proper form. If you don't swim well, find a class that offers routines in the shallow end of the pool, such as water walking. As your strength grows, you can increase your pace for enhanced fitness.

Check with your health care provider first if you have chronic health problems (e.g., heart issues, arthritis, backache, injury and obesity), you're pregnant or rehabilitating from an injury.



June 8 is Family Health and Fitness Day, an annual event sponsored by the National Recreation and Park Association. It's a great reminder that family fun, such as biking, swimming and fitness programs at local parks and community centers, can build health. Check out nearby parks for activities your family can enjoy together. Learn more at nrpa.org/events/family-fitness-day/.



QUIKQUIZ™:

Adult ADHD

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) occurs in about 8% of children and can continue into adulthood. Typical symptoms include frequent hyperactivity, impulsiveness and inability to focus. Test your knowledge.

1. The exact cause of ADHD is unclear.
 True False
2. ADHD is a fairly new disorder.
 True False
3. In adults with ADHD, symptoms often increase.
 True False
4. Diagnosis in adults is difficult.
 True False
5. Risk of ADHD may increase if you have blood relatives with ADHD.
 True False



ANSWERS:

1. **True** — Research suggests it may involve irregularities with the central nervous system during a child's development.
2. **False** — ADHD symptoms were first published in The Lancet in 1902.
3. **False** — Adults tend to have fewer symptoms as they age, but they can still interfere with daily functioning. Signs include uncontrolled impulses, such as impatience and frequent mood swings.
4. **True** — ADHD can go untreated because its symptoms are similar to those caused by other mental health conditions, such as anxiety.
5. **True** — Other risks include: premature birth, brain injury, and the child's mother smoking, using alcohol or having extreme stress during pregnancy.

Worried about your symptoms? Seek a health care provider who has training and experience in testing and caring for adult ADHD. Learn more at add.org/adhd-test/.

Overwhelmed at Home?

If you come home from work and face what feels like a mountain of household, relationship and child responsibilities, you aren't alone. A Pew Research Center survey found working parents especially feel rushed, tired and stressed in all facets of home life.



There's no magic formula for finding a work-life balance. However, the following tips can help you feel less overwhelmed and more able to enjoy your life after work.

- **Exercise regularly.** Enlist a child, a partner or your dog for a 20- to 30-minute walk after work to unwind. You'll boost your mood, energy and fitness.
- **Set realistic housekeeping goals.** Nobody's home is perfect. Decide what absolutely must be done and what can wait.
- **Discuss household chores with your family.** Work together to clearly and fairly distribute home responsibilities with your partner. Teach your kids to pitch in where possible.
- **Don't overdo it.** If you're overscheduled with extra community or social activities, learn to say no when you need to.

“Your body hears everything your mind says.”

— Naomi Judd

Cancer Screening Guide for Guys



Men's Health Month in June is an opportunity to learn more about cancer tests.

Case in point: Prostate cancer is the most common type of malignancy in men (besides skin cancer).

Do men need regular prostate cancer screening if they have no symptoms or elevated risk for prostate cancer? Screening involves a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test and often a digital rectal exam. The American Cancer Society (ACS) advises men to discuss screening with their health care providers if they are:

- Age 40 and at highest risk for the disease because they have more than 1 first-degree relative (a father or brother) who had prostate cancer at an early age;
- Age 45 and at elevated risk due to being African American and/or having a father, brother or son diagnosed with the disease when they were younger than 65;
- Age 50 and at average risk and are expected to live at least another decade.

The good news: The 5-year survival rate for non-spreading prostate cancer is nearly 100%.

Note: Because prostate cancer usually grows slowly and, if a man is seriously ill and not expected to live for another 10 years, cancer screening and treatment may not be indicated.

What about tests for other cancers? Colorectal cancer is highly preventable with regular exams, such as a colonoscopy and fecal DNA test. The ACS recommends men begin colorectal screening at age 45 or earlier, depending on individual needs. Also, ask your provider about skin cancer checks.



The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **The Heat is On**, is at personalbest.com/extras/19V6tools.

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