

OUTWIT YOUR APPETITE

If you find yourself peering into the refrigerator or hitting up the vending machine when it seems you just ate, it may not be weak willpower at play but rather hunger hormones. We asked three top weight-loss doctors to share the do's and don'ts of winning the hunger game.



TRY A SMOOTHIE

EAT BREAKFAST

DO: Start with breakfast. "Eating a substantial breakfast that includes a good source of protein helps reduce appetite and cravings later in the day," says Scott Isaacs, M.D., author of *Beat Overeating Now!* "Skipping breakfast causes the hunger hormone ghrelin to surge, and you may end up overeating."

► **Try this:** Make a breakfast smoothie with 1 cup each of frozen fruit, fresh spinach, Greek yogurt and water, plus a few ice cubes and flavorings such as vanilla. Aim for a thicker consistency, which satisfies the appetite better.



LOAD UP ON OMEGA 3

TRY ANTIOXIDANTS

DO: Calm inflammation. "Inflammation interferes with the action of hormones that suppress appetite," Isaacs says. "And fat cells are the biggest source of inflammation in the body." Overeating creates a vicious cycle of packing on more fat, which causes more inflammation, which triggers more cravings.

► **Try this:** Squelch inflammation with antioxidants and omega-3 fats. Try colorful, antioxidant-rich vegetables—think broccoli, kale, spinach or beets. Plan a weekly meal of wild-caught Publix salmon, high in omega-3s.



SIT DOWN & EAT

FOCUS ON MEALS

DON'T: Graze all day long. "If you're continually nibbling instead of taking time for a meal, you're stoking the hunger hormones but never satisfying them." That can leave you wanting more and more to eat," Peeke says.

► **Try this:** Sit down to a balanced meal such as a grilled chicken breast and vegetables with brown rice. That does a better job of satisfying hunger compared with snacking on junk foods.

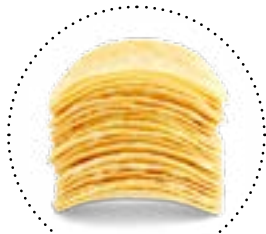


EAT YOUR MEALS

STAY FULL LONGER

DON'T: Skip meals. This can send hunger spiraling out of control. "When people are hungry, their brains are more stimulated by high-fat, high-calorie foods, and they are more likely to choose those foods," says Ellen Schur, M.D., assistant professor, University of Washington, Seattle.

► **Try this:** Space meals three to four hours apart and plan a nutritious afternoon snack, such as low-fat cottage cheese with walnuts, to keep hunger in check.

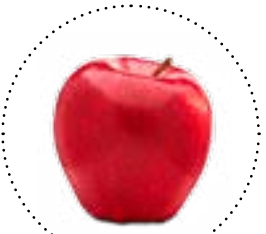


KNOW YOUR VICES

BE AWARE

DO: Know your trigger foods. "Certain foods—typically foods that are sugary, salty or fatty—tend to overstimulate the reward center of the brain and stir up hunger hormones," says Pamela Peeke, M.D., *The New York Times* bestselling author of *The Hunger Fix*. For you, maybe ice cream or potato chips spark overeating.

► **Try this:** If a certain food causes you to lose control, keep your distance. "If you ride out a craving for 10 minutes, often times it subsides," Peeke says.



MAKE SMALL FIXES

KEEP IT SIMPLE

DON'T: Crash diet. Slow and moderate weight loss is more likely to be sustained long-term. "When a person loses a lot of weight quickly, hormones that drive hunger work even harder to protect fat stores, making weight regain more likely," Schur says.

► **Try this:** Make simple eating changes that make sense to you and that you can continue for the long haul, Schur says. One of her weight-loss patients tried a whole-foods diet that minimized processed foods.

HUNGER BUSTERS

Foods that are higher in protein and fiber, as well as those that pack fewer calories per bite (allowing bigger portions), are better at soothing hunger hormones. Foods that require more chewing also are more satisfying. Try these swaps:

Instant oatmeal	Steel-cut oats
Breadbasket appetizer	Vegetable soup appetizer
Standard pizza crust	Whole-grain pizza crust
Corn muffin	Corn on the cob
Raisins	Grapes
Ice cream	Greek frozen yogurt
Milk chocolate bar	Chocolate-covered strawberries
Orange juice	Oranges
Chips with sour cream dip	Raw veggies with hummus
Pretzels	Low-fat popcorn

SLIMMING LIFESTYLE



Everyday **habits** can play a big role in **appetite** control.

Catch your z's. "When you don't get enough sleep, hunger hormones get out of sync, which interferes with appetite control the rest of the day," Peeke says. Aim for seven to eight hours of sleep.

Minimize chemicals. "Chemicals in the environment can interfere with hunger hormones, stimulate appetite and cause fat cells to multiply and grow," Isaacs says. One strategy: Opt for leaner red meat since

cattle store pollutants called PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) in their fat.

Get active. Exercise can make the body more responsive to leptin, a hormone that quiets appetite, Isaacs says. Aim for an hour of exercise every day doing an activity you enjoy.

Ease stress. "Stress causes levels of the hormone cortisol to rise, which triggers appetite," Peeke says. Rather than reach for food, tame tension with a good belly laugh.