

The Path to Reducing Junk Food

Step 1: Identify and list junk foods in your kitchen.

- **Goal:** Be more aware of diet and what is considered “junk” food.

Step 2: Listing healthier, but still enjoyable alternatives next to each junk food item.

- **Goal:** Be more aware of alternate, more healthy choices.

Step 3: Make a realistic plan (1-3 months suggested).

- **Goal:** Be aware that it takes time to adjust to changes; we don't want to rush things!

Step 4: Reward yourself with hobbies.

- **Goal:** Feel satisfied in a way that does not involve junk food.

Step 5: When a slip occurs, don't get discouraged! They will happen, you are human, so don't worry too much about it.

- **Goal:** Know that you are not perfect, and that is okay! Keep working towards your goals and it will happen.

Resources

1. Cronometer
 - a. Free comprehensive nutrition tracking app
 - b. Log your diet, exercise, biometrics and notes.
 - c. <https://cronometer.com>
2. NHS Calorie Checker
 - a. Quick access to calorie checker on the go if you are not sure of the calorie count of a specific food
 - b. Also offers weight gain and weight loss support
 - c. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/calorie-checker/?tabname=weight-loss-support>
3. Printable Calorie and Food Trackers
4. Imani Clinic Nutrition Guide:
https://iheop.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/2/8/132834899/nutrition_guide_for_different_age_groups.pdf

Steps to Reduce “Junk” Food

What is “junk” food?

- “Junk” foods are foods that contain **high amounts of calories, fats, salts, and simple carbohydrates** that provide little to no nutritional value. They do not have a substantial amount of dietary fibers, protein, vitamins, or minerals which enhance proper function of the body. Instead “junk” food **stores excess fats, sugars, and salts** in the body which can eventually **clog arteries** and cause potentially life-threatening **health conditions**.
- **“Junk” Foods vs Fast Foods:** Not all fast food options are junk foods; however, a large amount of them are. It all depends on **how certain foods are processed and what nutrients they contain**. For example, pizzas, burgers, and tacos are not always considered junk food depending on how they are prepared and the ingredients they are prepared with.



Beverage Alternatives

Unhealthy Beverages	Healthier Alternative Beverages
<p>High Caloric Fruit Juices/ Juice (**Not limited only to “Simply Beverages”) There is often a misconception that fruit juices are healthy because they come from fruit. Many fruit juice brands put as much sugar in their drinks as soda. It is important to watch out for unhealthy brands. This includes: Welches, Naked, Simply, Langers, Odwalla Caloric Range: 110 - 290 calories per serving</p>	<p>100% Juices with less/no Sugar added There are some healthier Juices that reduce the amount of sugar added. (Some even have no sugar added) Regardless, Juices should be considered an occasional drink and not a daily consumable This includes: SunSweet, Bolthouse, Tropicana, POM Caloric Range: 70 - 180 calories per serving</p>
<p>Soda/ Soda Pop Common soda beverages have high amounts of sugar added, which isn't good for the body as a daily consumable. Caloric Range: 260 - 80 calories per serving</p>	<p>Sparkling Water/Club Sodas or Healthier Juices mentioned Previously (see Juices) Sparkling Sodas mimic the bubbly/fizzing sensation of soda, but without the sugar present. This provides a good transition from soda into something healthier. One can also squeeze juice from citrus fruits for some flavoring. Once again, these drinks should be considered an occasional drink and not a daily consumable Caloric Range: ~ 0 calories per serving</p>
<p>High Calorie Coffee Drinks/ Flavored Coffee Drinks Common everyday drinks that are often associated as morning breakfast drinks. This is one of the most frequent drinks consumed on a day to day basis. Caloric Range: 500- 1400 calories per serving</p>	<p>Homemade Coffees or Teas. (Cream and sugar moderation.) With homemade coffee/ tea, you monitor the amount of sugar, cream and milk that is added to your drink. Visualization of the amount sugar added helps limit consuming too much sugar. Caloric Range: 1-3 calories (plain) per serving</p>
<p>Purchased Smoothie Drinks Places like Jumba Juice and Dairy Queen tend to have a mix of healthy and unhealthy drinks which can be a little misleading. It's important to know what's being added into your drink. Similar to high caloric drinks, this is a common daily drink. All in all, moderation is key. Caloric Range: 800 ~ 2000 calories per serving</p>	<p>Homemade smoothies/ Drinks Being able to customize your drinks allows for more sugar moderation. There are many recipes shared online for healthier homemade smoothies. Caloric Range: 300 ~ 400 calories per serving</p>

Food Alternatives

Unhealthy Food	Healthier Alternative Food
<p>Ice Cream Caloric Range: 150-300 calories per serving</p>	<p>Frozen Yogurt A lower-calorie and healthier option compared to ice creams, which contains less fat and high amounts of sugar. Caloric Range: 100-150 calories per serving</p>
<p>Cake Caloric Range: 250-350 calories per serving</p>	<p>Banana Bread A close alternative to cake for a sugar tooth without the added sugar and fats. Caloric Range: 200-250 calories per serving</p>
<p>Potato Chips Caloric Range: 210-300 calories per serving</p>	<p>Kale Chips A much healthier option compared to potato chips, candy can be just as crunchy and flavorful. Caloric Range: 90-120 calories per serving</p>
<p>Candy Bars Caloric Range: 215-400 calories per serving</p>	<p>Fruit/Dark Chocolate A sweet alternative compared to candy bars, which usually control excessive amounts of trans fat and sugars. Fruit and dark chocolate provide good sugars for the body and help reduce heart related health issues. Caloric Range: 50-250 calories per serving</p>
<p>Fried/ Oil Based/Fast Food Restaurants Caloric Range: varies but usually ~1000</p>	<p>Sandwiches/ Veggie options/ Change cooking methods Using whole wheat bread and other healthier options when eating food with higher amounts of fat can make a big overall difference in health. Switching turkey or tuna for pork and any other added vegetables goes a long way when it comes to fast food. Caloric Range: can reduce significantly depending on substitutions with meats and veggies</p>

Tips for Parents

1. Educate and explain the **benefits** of eating healthier foods
 - a. **Ex.:** Explain that milk has calcium that is **good for their bones**
2. Educate and explain the **various health issues** linked to eating **too much** junk food.
 - a. Fried foods→ heart disease
 - b. Sugary foods→ high blood sugar or diabetes
 - c. Soda→ high acidity→ damaged teeth
3. Be a **good role model** for healthier eating
 - a. Children observe and gain habits **based on their environment**. By creating an environment where healthier food options are promoted, children can start to avoid junk food.
 - b. **Ex.:** instead of ordering fries, order a side salad or coleslaw
4. **Avoid using junk food as a bribe or reward**
5. **Bring your child/children to the grocery store**
 - a. Getting kids involved in grocery shopping is a great way for kids to **learn how to read food labels and compare ingredient lists** for particular foods. This also exposes children to healthier food options and alternatives.
 - b. **Ex.:** instead of buying a Twix bar, buy chocolate that is 60% cacao.
6. Try to **substitute sugary foods for fruits**
 - a. A great alternative to sweets-- like ice cream, cookies, etc.-- is fruit.
 - b. Xylitol, or sugar alcohol, is a healthier alternative to regular sugar.
 - i. **Ex.:** pick gum, which has xylitol, over Sour Patch
7. Educate children on **stress management**
 - a. **Understanding stress and ways to manage stress** are important for creating healthier eating habits.
 - b. Many people turn to junk food when they are stressed. By educating children on the various **stress management techniques**, kids can start to avoid junk food.
 - c. **Yoga, meditation, painting, drawing, playing outside with a mask**, etc. are all ways to de-stress.