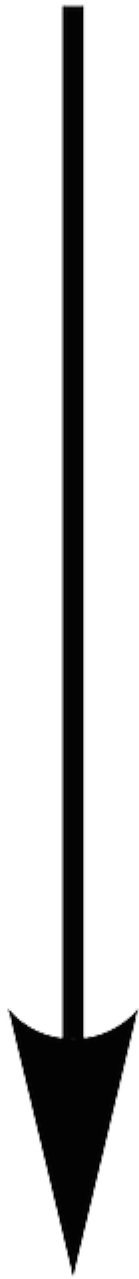


# Weight Loss-R<sub>x</sub>

Happy September!

There is more and more research that suggests that we can become truly addicted to food just like we can to drugs. Want to find out if you are an addict? Look at the picture below for 10 seconds.





How did the picture make you feel?

Hungry? You might have a problem.

Happy? You definitely have a problem.

Loved? You need an intervention, right now!

All joking aside, food addiction is a real thing and can be every bit as strong as any other addiction. When we engage in pleasurable activities that are completely normal and healthy- like being with loved ones, bonding with pets, accomplishing goals, sex, exercise, creative endeavors, etc. the good feeling we get is due to

stimulation of receptors in our brain by hormones that are sometimes called our "happy" neurotransmitters (typically dopamine, GABA, oxytocin and norepinephrine). Unfortunately, these same receptors are also stimulated by alcohol, tobacco, cocaine, heroin and, as it turns out, junk foods like refined sugars and starches! No wonder so many of us eat when we are lonely or anxious. Now this wouldn't necessarily be such a bad thing, except that unlike with exercise and other healthy activities, when that stimulation is caused by chemicals like drugs and sugar our brains fight against it by turning off some of the receptors for these substances. Therefore we need more and more of the drug to get the same good feelings. So we are trapped in the awful spiral of needing to use more and more of these substances to feel good while at the same time actually feeling worse and worse, making us want to use even more of the substance, and so on.

So what do we do about it? Well we already know which treatments have been shown to help with other types of addiction and they often work for food addictions too.

## **1. Cold Turkey**



The prime example of what this technique works best on is refined sugar. There is almost no one who doesn't say that after just two or three weeks of no sugary drinks, brownies and cakes they just don't crave them as much as they used to. Try it. This one is easy and is well worth your time.

## **2. Cut Down**



Sometimes we have just gotten into a habit of doing something that we aren't even aware has gone overboard. Take a good look at your diet. If you find that a lot of what you eat is bread products for instance, cut down to once a day or less. Just make sure to fill that void with lean protein, whole fruits and vegetables and limited amounts of healthy fats. And stay hydrated! Much of what we perceive as hunger is actually subtle dehydration.

### **3. Get Support**



I'm not necessarily talking about a 12 step program (although there are "Overeaters Anonymous" and similar groups out there if you think it may help) but almost everything is easier when we do it together. So grab a friend who might also benefit from a bit more fitness and make a pact to be in great shape by the Holidays. Supporting others not only helps them, it strengthens your own resolve as well.

#### **4. Manage Triggers**



It's a lot harder to say no to temptations if you are surrounded by them. So if your office break room is filled with donuts every day at lunch, try changing your routine until you are stronger. Instead of lunch at the office, grab a friend and get some shopping done or go for a walk while snacking on healthy, energy packed foods. You'll probably be a lot more productive in the afternoon too!

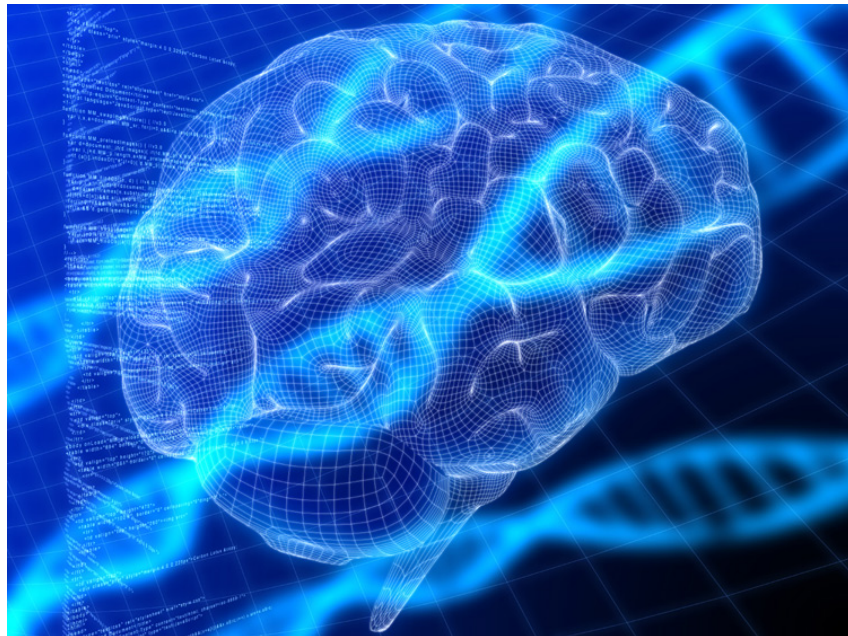
## **5. Deal With The Underlying Problem**





Depression, anxiety, sadness and loss are part of being human. Even strong and highly successful people go through these things. But if emotional struggles are leading you to self medicate with food, get help. Talk to your doctor. There are a lot of very effective treatments for these conditions. I am not a psychiatrist or therapist but if you need someone to talk to I will be happy to listen.

## **6. Help Is On The Way**



Science is working on ways to better deal with all sorts of addictions, including food. From promising new medications to deep brain stimulation to gene therapies, there is much to get excited about for the future of this problem. But we aren't there yet and until we are, stay strong. You will thank yourself for it later.

If you are interested, click on the link below to take a short online test that can help tell whether or not food addiction might be contributing to your struggles with weight.

[Am I Addicted To Food?](#)

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