

# Four habits that lead to better food choices

September 10 2018, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter

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(HealthDay)—The choices you make every day, both big and small, influence your weight and your health.

For instance, do you grab coffee and a donut for breakfast or opt for yogurt with [fresh fruit](#)?

Understanding why you make the choices you do and how to improve those choices are important steps for weight loss.

Start by making healthful foods easier to choose. The range of available snacks and desserts is enormous, compared to nutritious choices. But studies show that people will switch to a healthier food if it's more accessible than an unhealthy one.

So don't keep cake in the house and always have fresh fruit on the counter. And cut up vegetables in advance so they're ready when hunger strikes.

Also, limit your choices. A buffet can be dangerous because people tend to sample everything ... and keep coming back for more! But in any setting, the more variety you have, the more you'll eat.

Create your diet menus from a carefully thought out list of choices using the largest variety of low-fat grains and vegetables, and the smallest variety of high-fat, high-sugar foods.

Making decisions uses the same brain resources that you draw on for self-control. Pre-plan each meal so you reduce the amount of temptation you face and don't have to constantly make [food choices](#).

But here's a surprise: Don't eliminate all favorites. That's because always feeling deprived can feed your desire for unhealthy food. Just buy one single serving of a treat at a time so you can't devour a huge bag of chips in one sitting.

Finally, don't reward yourself with food. For overweight people, eating is

often a favorite pastime, and food is a motivator. Weaken the connection by giving yourself non-[food](#) rewards whether you're celebrating a promotion at work or another 5 pounds lost.

**More information:** Learn more about the [psychology of eating](#) from the Cleveland Clinic.

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Citation: Four habits that lead to better food choices (2018, September 10) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-09-habits-food-choices.html>

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