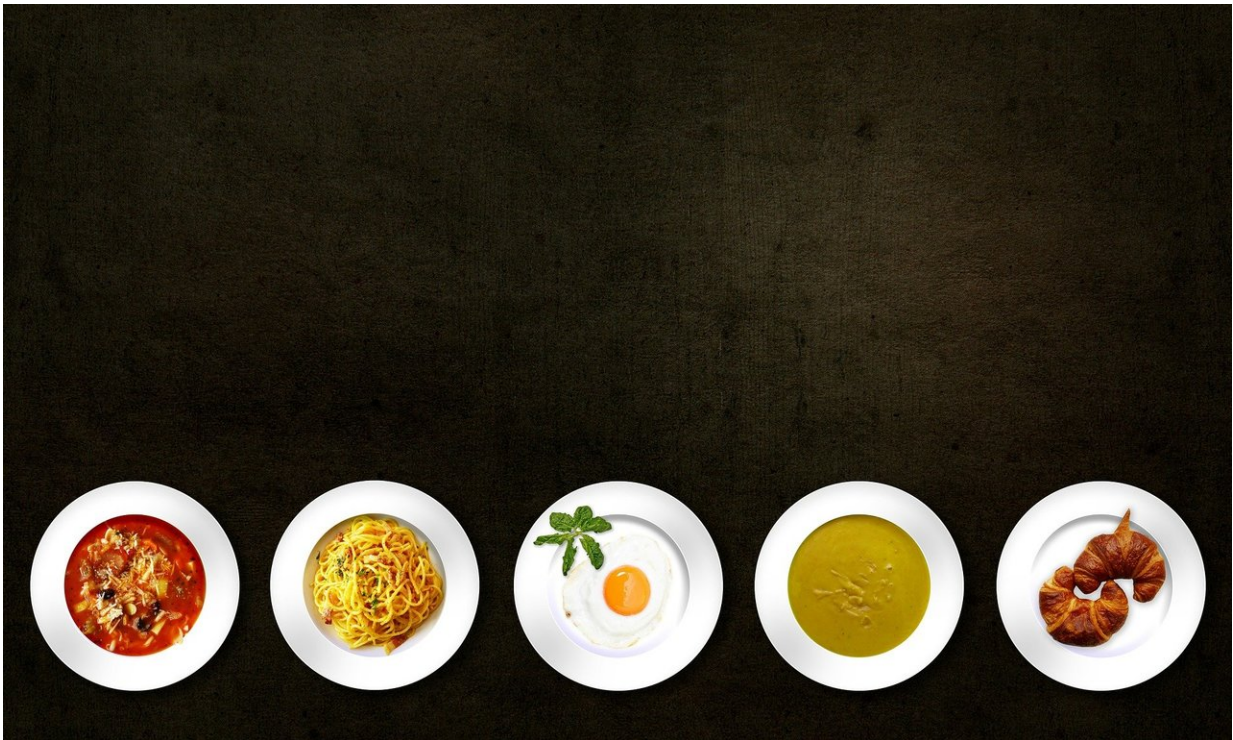


# Review confirms food cravings can be reduced

December 11 2018

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Food craving, the intense desire to eat certain foods, can sabotage efforts to maintain healthy eating habits and body weight, no matter the time of year.

However, an examination of 28 current peer-reviewed scientific studies

largely substantiates findings that changes in diet, [prescription medications](#), [physical activity](#) and [bariatric surgery](#) reduce craving, said Candice Myers, Ph.D., assistant professor—research at LSU's Pennington Biomedical Research Center.

"Craving influences what people eat and their [body weight](#), but there are some components of our behavior and diet that we do have control over," Myers said. "Being mindful of these desires gives us more control of them." Myers was the lead author of "Food Cravings and Body Weight: a Conditioning Response."

For example, one proven way to reduce the longing for a certain food is to eat it less frequently. In other words, it's better to remove something from your diet than to try to eat smaller helpings of it.

"The upside of craving is that it is a conditioned response that you can unlearn," said John Apolzan, Ph.D., director of Pennington Biomedical's Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism Laboratory. "It's not easy, but it can be done."

Other takeaways from their review included that:

- Losing weight reduces food craving.
- Beware exercise can increase cravings.
- Cravings account for as much as 11 percent of eating behavior and [weight gain](#), more than genetics currently explains.
- Many obesity drugs—phentermine, lorcaserin, semaglutide and liraglutide among others—reduce craving.
- Different demographic and socioeconomic groups may have different responses to food cravings. But little is known about these potential differences, and more investigation is needed.

"Food craving is an important piece of the weight-loss puzzle. It doesn't

explain weight gain 100 percent," Myers said. "A number of other factors, including genetics and eating behavior, are also involved."

Provided by Louisiana State University

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