

Mayo Clinic Minute: Toss the junk food for better health

January 7 2022, by Jason Howland



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The steady stream of holiday cookies and treats may have slowed, but for millions of Americans, the appetite for high-fat, sodium-laden sweets continues. Making the switch from highly-processed junk food to healthier whole foods can be challenging.

Kate Zeratsky, a Mayo Clinic registered dietitian nutritionist, says making changes in your [eating habits](#) can help.

French fries, pizza, potato chips and sweets with their added salt, fat and sugar are tasty. Zeratsky says these highly processed foods often are stripped of their [nutritional value](#) even though they taste so good to many of us.

"We like taste and convenience, and those foods generally fit that bill."

And we are creatures of habit. The good news is habits can be broken.

"Changing a habit or a behavior is a challenge, and, so, having a plan as you go about that change probably will be helpful," says Zeratsky.

She says one option is removing the temptation.

"Instead of having those foods on your kitchen counter, maybe putting out a bowl of fruit."

Try gradually cutting back and pairing it with a new food. It might be pairing that ice cream with some cut-up fruit.

And option three: Replace that sweet candy or cookie with a piece of fresh fruit.

"Allow yourself to test and experiment. It gives you freedom and some permission to find out what works without feeling like it's such a tough task," says Zeratsky.

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Citation: Mayo Clinic Minute: Toss the junk food for better health (2022, January 7) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-01-mayo-clinic-minute-toss-junk.html>

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