

10 Ways to Ditch Your Cravings!

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According to a recent article in the New York Times, “*Food Corporations Turn to Chefs in a Quest for Healthy Flavor*,” Big Food companies like PepsiCo, Kellogg’s, and even fast food giants like Taco Bell, are changing their ways in response to the increasing public demand for healthier food options. To improve their image as healthy food manufacturers, Big Food corporations have called upon top chefs to help them create healthy menu makeovers, infusing real, fresh, whole food into old recipe favorites.

Why is this happening now? Intense pressure brought on by politicians and their constituents (you and me!) has given these food manufacturers no choice but to respond to the public outcry for healthier food. It’s no longer enough for these companies to earn a profit by selling food that tastes good.

People are beginning to use the power of the pocketbook to show these companies that the food they sell must also be nutritious. That’s because people everywhere are waking up. They are beginning to see the dangers of genetically modified ingredients and all the sugar, salt, and fats hidden in our food supply.

From fancy restaurants to fast food chains, chefs are catching on that people want their food to make them feel good, not just while they are eating it but hours, days, and years afterward.

Really, this news shouldn’t make the headlines. This is common sense! Paying for food that makes us sick is as crazy as shooting ourselves in the foot. It just doesn’t make sense. Big Food is finally getting the message and getting on board.

But remember, no processed or fast food option will ever be better than a healthy home-cooked meal. The best way to ensure you are eating the highest quality, most nutritious food possible is to prepare your own food in your own kitchen. We are all chefs. You don’t have to be trained at Le Cordon Bleu to know your way around a kitchen. You just need a little knowledge, some imagination, and a sense of adventure.

A desire for real food is a fundamental part of our basic biological blueprint. Given the chance, our taste receptors will naturally gravitate toward the inherent sweetness found in vegetables, fruits, and even nuts and seeds.

So, how do you reprogram your taste buds to ditch the cravings for sugar, salt, and fats? You can start by eating real, fresh, whole foods. Avoid fake, commercialized foods that come in convenience packages or are made in a lab.

Here are 10 more tips to get you excited about ditching the sugar, salt, and fats:

1. Sauté or roast your veggies to bring out their natural sweetness. Properly searing your chicken or meat brings out the inherent sweetness by way of the Maillard reaction. This is a fancy name for what happens when you create that nice, brown crust on your meat. Want more cooking tips like this? Check out [The Blood Sugar Solution Cookbook!](#)

2. Play with herbs like cilantro, parsley, dill, basil, and oregano to add flavor and phytonutrients! Finish a meal by adding fresh herbs before plating or serving. This last-minute addition kicks the flavor up a notch!
3. Healthy fats found in avocado, coconut, and tahini not only increase the flavor of your meal, they also add that creamy, luscious texture found in many rich foods. See for yourself just how healthy and tasty desserts can be by trying this [Amazing Avocado Gelato!](#)
4. Try creating a savory, umami (Japanese for “delicious”) flavor. Add moderate amounts of tamari, umeboshi plum paste, balsamic vinegar, tomato paste, dried mushroom, or sea vegetables to your next stew, soup, sauce, or stir-fry.
5. Cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg, clove, ginger, and even cayenne or chipotle pepper powder are all extremely flavorful additions to a meal. Spices like these excite your taste buds and grab your attention. This is helpful, because, as studies show, when we are focused on actually tasting our food rather than mindlessly gobbling it up, we actually need less food to feel satisfied.
6. Befriend some kitchen must-haves like real vanilla extract or vanilla bean or coconut butter. Or use common, every-day foods like lemons in some creative ways. For example, use lemon zest to add real zing to any meal!
7. For the most flavor, eat seasonally and locally. Canned or packaged foods or foods that have traveled great distances in the back of a truck just can’t compare to the succulence of a fresh piece of locally grown fruit.
8. Check your hydration. Digestion starts in your mouth with your saliva, which helps us taste all the magnificent flavor in food. If you are dehydrated and not producing enough saliva, you won’t really be able to enjoy your food.
9. Check your medications. Believe it or not, most medications interfere with the body’s ability to taste and smell. Some of them can even create an unpleasant metallic taste in the mouth. Wondering how you might decrease the number of pills you take? Learn more about [functional medicine](#).
10. Got nutrition? Nutrient deficiency is an important cause of improper taste perception. A lack of certain vitamins and minerals can markedly impair your ability to smell and taste food. Most Americans have several nutrient deficiencies, but there is one in particular that can especially keep you from enjoying your next meal: zinc. Try adding foods like oysters, pecans, sunflower seeds, and lentils to increase your daily intake of this important mineral. Try the recipe for my Red Lentil Soup from [The Daniel Plan Cookbook](#). If you are deficient, you might also need to take a zinc supplement. Work with one of my [nutrition coaches](#) to ensure your nutrition status is up to par.

For more ways to use your kitchen to take back your health, check out The Daniel Plan Cookbook. Get tips and tricks for making healthy and tasty meals. Learn what foods you should eat to boost your metabolism, balance your blood sugar, and lose weight.

[Mark Hyman, MD](#), believes that we all deserve a life of vitality—and that we have the potential to create it for ourselves. That’s why he is dedicated to tackling the root causes of chronic disease by harnessing the power of Functional Medicine to transform healthcare. He is

a practicing family physician, a nine-time #1 New York Times bestselling author, and an internationally recognized leader, speaker, educator, and advocate in his field. He is the Director of the [Cleveland Clinic Center for Functional Medicine](#). He is also the founder and medical director of [The UltraWellness Center](#), chairman of the board of the [Institute for Functional Medicine](#) and a founding doctor of The Daniel Plan.