



Junk the Junk Food

Let's be real, life just wouldn't be as fun without "treats." And losing weight is hard enough without feeling like you can't enjoy your favorite foods, so we're actually encouraging you to indulge—a little—or make smarter swaps while still getting your fix. That's what we'll work on in this session.



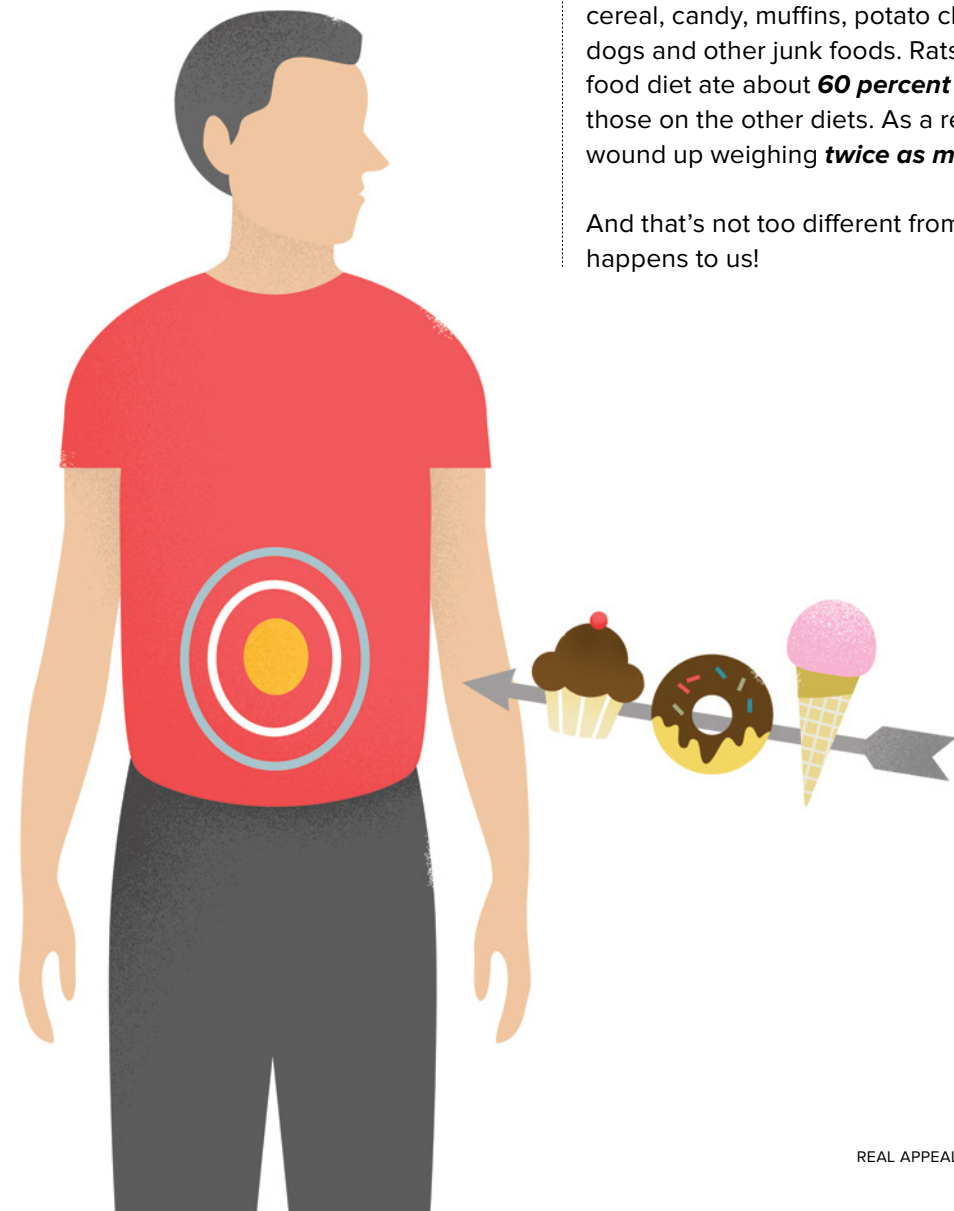
How Junk Food Takes Aim at Your Waistline

What do a chocolate-glazed donut, organic sea salt potato chips, the pricey pastry at the high-end bakery and fast food fries all have in common? These foods—all high in calories with little to no nutritional value—are junk food. Sure, some are less chemical-y than others, but too much of any of these foods could overload you with calories, sugar, saturated fat and sodium.

No surprise here, but too much junk food can be a significant cause of the extra weight you're carrying around and may even contribute to fatigue, depression, fluctuating blood sugar levels and digestive problems.

For a glimpse of what junk food does to you, check out this study from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Rats were given one of three diets: a) their regular nutritionally balanced "rat chow," the equivalent of dog food or cat food, b) a high fat, lard-laced chow, or c) a junk food diet consisting of regular chow plus sugary cereal, candy, muffins, potato chips, hot dogs and other junk foods. Rats on the junk food diet ate about **60 percent more** than those on the other diets. As a result, they wound up weighing **twice as much**.

And that's not too different from what happens to us!

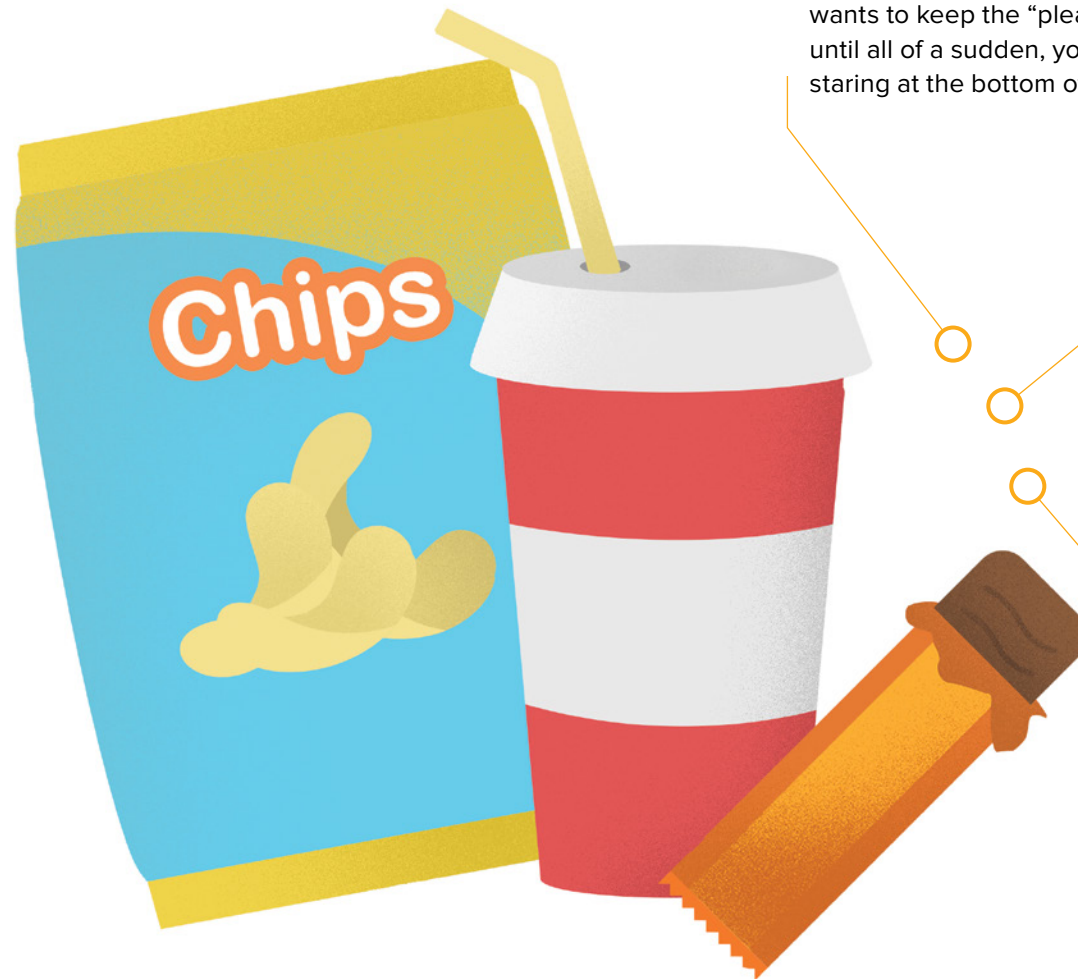


Here's Why Junk Food Is So Fattening

It doesn't satisfy hunger. Eat 300 calories of something nutritious, like turkey and bean chili, and you'll last a lot longer before feeling hungry than if you'd eaten a 300-calorie candy bar.

Why? Chalk it up to something called “glycemic index.” It comes from the word “glycemia” which means the presence of sugar in the blood. The glycemic index is a ranking of how carbohydrate-rich foods affect blood sugar. Foods with a *high* glycemic index, like the candy bar (as well as white bread, white rice, cookies and fries) make blood sugar rise quickly. The problem: It tends to fall more quickly, which sends a hunger signal to the brain that you'll most likely answer with food. The turkey and bean chili, on the other hand, has a *low* glycemic index, which helps keep hunger at bay by stabilizing blood sugar long after eating.

Low glycemic index foods tend to be high in fiber, like fruit, vegetables, legumes and whole grains (especially the “thick,” more intact whole grains like barley or quinoa). Numerous studies show that people on low-glycemic index diets—like the one featured in this Real Appeal program—tend to weigh less. Keep blood sugar in check and you can keep calories in check.



One bite leads to another.

Remember that potato chip ad that taunted “Betcha can’t eat just one?” Well, it was no exaggeration. Food manufacturers have worked hard to hit upon the perfect combinations of fat, sugar and salt that stimulate the brain’s pleasure centers and make certain foods irresistible (see Real Success Guide, Volume One, page 82). So, even if one part of your brain is telling you to “put that bag down,” another area wants to keep the “pleasure train” going until all of a sudden, you find yourself staring at the bottom of an empty bag.



It promotes belly fat.

Sugary cereals, candy, soda, even white bread are more likely to get converted to belly fat than “healthy carbs,” like whole grains, fruit and vegetables. A fascinating example of this comes from the University of Alabama. Overweight adults were given one of two diets: a high-GI diet with lots of refined carbs or a low-GI diet with healthier carbs and more healthy fat. For eight weeks, they were kept at their usual calorie level so they did not lose weight. Those on the low-GI diet wound up with an average of *11 percent less abdominal fat* than those on the high-GI diet.



It causes inflammation.

Junk foods, particularly sugary foods, promote inflammation. As explained in Session 8, chronic inflammation can be particularly harmful to your health and waistline. Diets high in junk also tend to be low in healthy foods, like fruits and vegetables, which *discourage* inflammation.

The Scoop on Sugar

It's enough to make your teeth hurt: **The average American takes in 22 teaspoons of added sugar daily, amounting to 350 Calories.** Added sugar is any type of sugar or syrup added to a food or beverage during processing (like the high fructose corn syrup in soda) or preparation (like the honey in your tea).

We're focusing only on added sugar; **naturally occurring sugar**, the type found naturally in fruit, milk and, to a small extent, vegetables is not really an issue when you're watching your weight. These foods don't tend to have all that much sugar (except for fruit juice, which is why we suggest a ½-cup-per-day limit). And, high levels of nutrients in these foods (calcium in milk; vitamins, fiber, and phytonutrients in produce) more than make up for the sugar.

NOTE: if you have diabetes or pre-diabetes, you may have to limit foods containing naturally occurring sugars. Check with your doctor.

The problem with added sugar is that it delivers nothing but calories—no nutrition, no nothing! Plus, in excess, sugar can contribute to a host of health problems. And it's not just what you're eating—it's what we're drinking too.



The Bittersweet Truth About Sugary Drinks

Pop (pardon the pun) quiz: What's the largest source of both calories and sugar for both American kids *and* adults? It's soft drinks, punch, sweetened iced tea, energy drinks and other sugary beverages. Most American adults drink at least one sugary beverage daily; younger adults are consuming an average of 338 calories from these sweet sips a day.

In Session 3, we suggested you cut out soda and other sugary drinks. If you're still struggling to do so, here are a few good reasons to keep trying.

The scale

Women who went from drinking one sugary drink or less *weekly* to one or more *daily* gained 17.6 pounds in eight years, according to a Harvard study. It's not just the calories (about 150 for 12 ounces) that are problematic, but the fact that your body barely notices liquid calories, so you end up consuming these beverages *on top of—*not *instead of—*other foods.

Your blood sugar

Drinking just one or more sugary beverages daily raised the risk for developing type 2 diabetes by 83 percent compared to drinking just one (or none) per month. (See "Does Sugar Cause Diabetes?" on the next page.)

Your heart

Women who drink two or more 12-ounce servings of sugar-sweetened beverages daily increased their heart disease risk by 35 percent compared to women who drink four servings (or fewer) monthly.

Your lab report

A daily sugary beverage habit raises blood levels of triglycerides—fat in the blood that contributes to heart disease. Meanwhile, it lowers HDL, the "good" cholesterol, which helps protect your heart.

The same health issues apply to eating too much added sugar from candy, pie and other sources. So, isn't it time to take a good, hard look at how much excess sugar you're consuming in your daily life?



Does Sugar Cause Diabetes?

Sugar can be a contributor, but before we get into that, let's first make sure you understand the two types of diabetes.



Type 1 Diabetes

In people with type 1, something goes haywire in the body and the immune system starts to attack the pancreas, the part of the body that makes insulin. Insulin is the hormone that whisks sugar from the blood and transfers it into cells where we can burn it for energy. The pancreas becomes so damaged it can no longer produce insulin, and blood sugar goes sky high. The treatment is insulin injections.

Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is a little different. In this case, the body still produces insulin, but not enough to do the job. Or your cells actually become resistant to the insulin. Type 2 is often diet-related: 80 percent of people with the condition are obese. (Family history, ethnicity and age are also factors.)

The types of foods we're eating can also play a role. A high glycemic index (GI) diet can raise the risk for the disease by 50 percent, according to a Harvard study. When you down a can of soda or polish off a Danish, blood sugar shoots up; that's a signal for your pancreas to spew out insulin to try to lower blood sugar. Many scientists believe that after years of this, your pancreas simply wears out and can't make enough insulin.



How Much Added Sugar Is Okay?

If the rest of your diet is healthy, you can get away with up to **10 percent** of daily calories from added sugar. The chart below shows what 10 percent translates to, in both grams (which you'll see on food labels) and teaspoons. To put this in perspective, a 12-ounce can of soda has about 33g of sugar!

This is just a point of reference; you don't have to actually track your sugar intake if you're following the Real Appeal meal plans or guidelines because it's a diet that's naturally low in sugar.

Daily Calorie Intake	1,200	1,300	1,500	1,600	1,700	1,800	2,000
Added Sugar Max (g)	30g	32.5g	37g	40g	43g	45g	50g
Equivalent Teaspoon Measurement	7.5	8	9	10	10.5	11	12.5



Are Artificial Sweeteners the Solution?



Are you doing your body a favor reaching for diet soda, “light” yogurt or other foods that contain artificial sweeteners and little to no calories?

Unfortunately, there’s no clear answer. Some research indicates that switching from regular soda to diet soda helps you lose weight, but not all studies link diet drink consumption with weight loss. If you find that artificially sweetened products help you lose weight, then lean on them to help you cut back on sugary foods (like soda). But go easy on them.

In addition to the artificial sweeteners listed on the right, you’ll see xylitol, erithritol, mannitol and other sugar alcohols in some “sugar-free” or “light” foods. They occupy a gray zone; they are found in nature, so they’re not artificial. But your body doesn’t absorb them well, so they have about half or fewer of the calories than sugar. In moderation—a stick of gum, for instance—they’re fine. But take in too much and you could wind up with diarrhea and other temporary tummy problems.

The following are the only artificial sweeteners approved in the U.S.

- **Acesulfame K** (acesulfame potassium). Brand names: Sunett and Sweet One
- **Aspartame**. Brand names: Equal and Nutra Sweet
- **Rebaudiana (Reb A)**, an extract of stevia. Brand names: Truvia, Pure Via, Sun Crystals
- **Saccharin**. Brand names: Sweet ‘N Low, Sweet Twin, NectaSweet
- **Sucralose**. Brand name: Splenda
- **Neotame**. No brand name—used by food manufacturers; not available to consumers.



The Other Junk in Junk Food

Sugar and calories aren’t the only negatives of junk food. Much of it is rife with food dyes, preservatives and unhealthy fats. Scour ingredient lists; if you see these top offenders, put them back on the shelf.

- **Partially hydrogenated oil**, which is full of trans fat, the type that raises the risk for heart disease, metabolic syndrome and cancer (more on this oil in the Real Success Guide, Volume One, page 100).
- **Artificial sugar** (see Are Artificial Sweeteners the Solution?)
- **Sodium nitrite/nitrate**, a preservative in cured meats that may raise cancer risk.
- **Artificial colorings**: consumer watchdog organization Center for Science in the Public Interest recommends avoiding: blue 1, blue 2, caramel coloring, citrus red 2, green 3, orange b, red 3, red 40, yellow 5 and yellow 6.

Don’t forget to check the sodium—ideally, your treat should have no more than 300 mg per serving. It may be hard to find treats at this level, but it’s something to strive for.



Partially hydrogenated oil

Artificial colorings

You Can Have Your Junk Food Fix. Here's How:

Ready to take control over your junk food habit? Try these steps.

1 Set a Daily Limit

"Your Daily Junk Food Targets," see chart below, gives you something to shoot for. If you're consuming much more than this, start by cutting back by half, and gradually weaning down.

Your Daily Junk Food Maximums

Your Daily Calorie Level	Your Daily Treat Calories (includes sweets, alcohol and salty snacks)
1,200–1,350*	0 Cal
1,351–1,550	100 Cal
1,551–1,800	150 Cal
1,801–1,950	175 Cal
1,951–2,100	200 Cal

* Because it's hard enough to squeeze adequate amounts of healthy foods into these low calorie levels, they don't come with a daily treat. However, if you want an occasional treat, page 16 of the Real Foods guide shows you how to work it in.

2 Save for Splurges

What if you're going to a party and want a piece of cake that's more caloric than your daily level? Save up for it by skipping your treat for a day or two.

3 Train Your Taste

Train down your tastes for super sugary, salty and/or greasy foods. Fortunately, taste buds are very adaptable—if you quit consuming these foods for a few weeks, they'll taste too sweet or salty or greasy once you try them again. Try some of the substitutes in the "Less Guilty" Guilty Pleasures chart on the next page or some of the healthy treats in the Real Foods Nutrition Guide.

4 Tackle Emotional Eating




Go back to Session 5 for a refresher or talk to your coach about issues you may be having.



Treat Yourself with These “Less Guilty” Guilty Pleasures



Spend your treat calories however you wish, but if you're interested in something healthier than pre-packaged vending machine snacks or preservative-laden convenience store fare, consider these swaps.

INSTEAD OF...	HAVE... *	BECAUSE...
Milk chocolate	Dark chocolate —60% cocoa or higher; 1 ounce is 163 calories	It's lower in sugar and richer in heart-healthy antioxidants. 
Sugar-sweetened beverages (including lemonade, punch, sodas, sweetened iced tea and others) and diet drinks	Real Appeal flavored sparkling water (recipes on p. 160 of the Real Foods Nutrition Guide). Or, store-bought flavored sparkling water (no sugar or artificial sugar), plain or with a splash (or so) of fruit juice. NOTE: Although fruit juice can be vitamin-rich, it's also sugar-rich, so either avoid it or have no more than 1/2 cup (total) daily.	They're hydrating, plus the fruit juice adds some vitamins or phytonutrients. 
Sweet iced tea	1 cup (8 fluid ounces) of lightly sweetened (or several cups of unsweetened) iced tea	Make your own by stirring in no more than 1 teaspoon of sugar per cup (versus up to 6 teaspoons of sugar in store-bought) or look for tea with no more than 20 calories per 8 ounces. 

Frappuccino or other sugary coffee drink

12-ounce latte with 2 percent milk (150 calories)

It's high in bone-building calcium; plus coffee contains beneficial phytonutrients. Two percent milk will feel like a treat after adjusting to lower-fat versions!



Corn chips, potato chips, and other crunchy snacks

Lightly salted nuts (60 mg sodium per ounce; 3 tablespoons is 150 calories) or **popcorn** (no partially hydrogenated oil) with no more than 50 calories and 60 mg sodium per cup popped

Nuts are rich in healthy fats, fiber and compounds that lower blood pressure. Popcorn is high in fiber, and you get lots of volume for the calories.



Vodka, gin, whiskey and other hard liquor

5-ounce glass of red wine ** (125 calories)

It contains 10 times more antioxidants than white wine; hard liquor contains virtually none.



Milk shake

1 cup **1% chocolate milk** (158 calories) or **calcium and D-enriched chocolate soy milk** (130 to 150 calories per cup)

Both are great sources of *calcium*, and soy offers cancer-protective *isoflavones*.



Cookie

Fruit and nut bar or a little granola with yogurt. Check labels for no more than 6 g of sugar per bar or serving of granola. (Like the Rolled Oats Quick Granola on page 52 of your Real Foods Nutrition Guide.)

Nuts offer healthy fats and other nutrients; granola offers whole grains.



* To find out how many treat calories you get, check the chart on page 18 for your treat calorie level.

** Note: If alcohol abuse is not an issue for you, and your healthcare provider has given the green light on drinking, then one daily drink for women, and two for men may be okay. A drink is: 5 ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer, or 1 1/2 ounces of “hard liquor” such as gin, vodka and whiskey. However, when trying to lose weight, it's best to drink just once or twice weekly because alcohol can loosen inhibitions—including keeping portions in check!



I will cut down on junk food



Commitment Contract

I'll aim to rein in my junk food intake.

Too much junk food will not only prevent me from losing weight, but it also puts me at risk for diabetes and heart disease. To enjoy treats in moderation, I will:

- Aim to **stay within my daily junk food calorie limit**, which is _____.
(Or, I'll save up for larger splurges.)
- Enter the calorie amount** of sweets, salty foods and other high-calorie/low-nutrition foods into the food tracker on RealAppeal.com.
- Wean myself off sugary drinks** (if you haven't already done so).
- Choose less sugary, salty and greasy foods** (like those in the "Less Guilty Guilty Pleasures" chart) so I can start to appreciate healthier treats. I'll use the chart below (and consult with my coach) to come up with swaps that work for me.

My Junk Food Swaps

INSTEAD OF...	I'LL TRY...
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- Meanwhile, I'll continue my other healthy habits (weighing in, tracking, staying within my calorie range, etc.) to the best of my ability.

My signature: _____