

# Should I give in to **cravings?**

Hot, crisp, salty french fries.  
Goosey, warm chocolate cake.  
A juicy steak grilled to perfection.  
What are you craving?

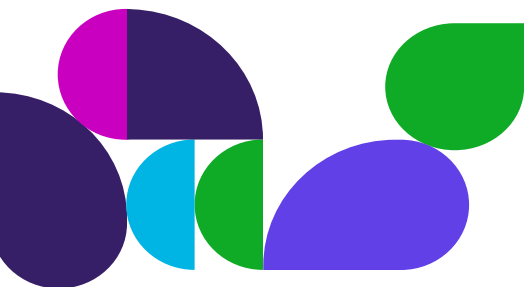


## Food cravings are **natural.**

We all have a taste for something specific from time to time. Studies show that certain foods trigger positive feelings in our brains. These foods usually have rich, sweet or salty qualities that we enjoy.<sup>1</sup> There could also be specific reasons your body is craving the nutrients a specific food provides. Or your craving could be motivated by emotions, environment, stress or boredom.

Everyone's heard of the proverbial pregnancy craving of pickles and ice cream. Like most cravings, these could be hormonal, stress-related, due to lack of sleep or emotional in nature.<sup>1</sup>

**It's important to understand why you're having a craving.** The goal is not to eliminate it or ignore what your body and brain are saying. Before you give in and eat whatever your heart or mind is telling you to, stop and think about what kind of craving you're having.



## Hunger versus craving

Physical hunger increases gradually. Cravings strike suddenly and are for specific foods. Ask yourself: Are you hungry or bored? Tired or thirsty? To prevent cravings:<sup>1</sup>

- Eat lean protein and fiber throughout the day.
- Stay hydrated.
- Eat nutritious meals and snacks at regular intervals.
- Avoid highly processed foods.



## Environmental cravings

You're walking by a pizza shop and it smells delicious. All you can think about is a pepperoni slice, but you just had lunch. This is a craving brought on by your environment. It could be an advertisement or a sign that plants the seed. Try to limit exposure to these cues. Avoid cooking shows, social media posts and videos of food if these trigger your cravings.<sup>1</sup>

## Association cravings

Some foods are associated with certain activities or locations. What would movie night be without a bucket of salty, buttery popcorn, a box of candy and a giant soda? It is a matter of learned behaviors. You can change your routine and reduce these types of cravings.<sup>1</sup>

## The four D's

Cravings can go away as quickly as they appear.<sup>1</sup> With that in mind, consider the four D's:

**Delay** eating what you crave.

**Distract** yourself with another activity.

**Deflect** your desire with a sugar-free beverage or a stick of gum.

**Downsize** your portion if you give in.

**By being mindful and managing your cravings,  
sweet, salty, spicy and more can be yours.**

Learn how we can help support you on your wellness journey.  
To sign up or learn more, go to  
[Go.Livongo.com/STATEOFIOWA/New](https://Go.Livongo.com/STATEOFIOWA/New).

<sup>1</sup><https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/cravings/#>

Las comunicaciones del programa Livongo están disponibles en español. Al inscribirse, podrá configurar el idioma que prefiera para las comunicaciones provenientes del medidor y del programa. Para inscribirse en español, llame al 800-945-4355 o visite [Hola.Livongo.com/STATEOFIOWA](https://Hola.Livongo.com/STATEOFIOWA)

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