

# Now here's a subject few people enjoy:

by Heather Reynolds

By now, most people have heard so much about what to eat and what not to eat that they have either given up or are so confused they don't know what to do. There are some truths to what you hear, but fully understanding them is not as easy as it may seem.

Let's start with fats. What you should know about fats is that there are three kinds of them, and one of these can be quite harmful if intake of it is high. Saturated fats decrease the ability of the body to eliminate fats and cholesterol from the bloodstream, the result being a greater risk of blockage and possible heart trouble.

To prevent this from happening, adopting proper habits, such as substituting snacks low in fat and cholesterol for snacks high in both, and watching what is in the foods you eat, will decrease the chances of having problems later.

A further prevention is regular exercise, which increases the ability of the body to lower the levels of cholesterol and fats in the bloodstream. This results in

good blood circulation, and more importantly, healthier dieting, for the only way to diet effectively is to combine exercise and good nutrition.

If the body is lacking nutrients that it needs in order to function, the brain lowers the basal metabolic rate so the body will

require fewer calories. This is why dieters who restrict their caloric intake seem to lose a certain amount of weight and then can't lose any more. As a result, they get annoyed and give up on the diet altogether.

Well, it is fine to talk of idealistic dieting, the 'right' way, but how practical is it? When you are

studying at 2 a.m., you don't crave apples, you crave pizza or chocolate. This is easily explained as a signal that your body needs fuel to continue. Fuel for the body is a simple sugar called glucose. All food consumed is converted to glucose and, if not used immediately,

changed to fat and stored for future use. Many of the foods that are called junk food are those which are high in sugar or fat; these foods have little need of processing. As a result, they give quick energy, but also relatively low nutrition with high caloric intake. So in order for the body to get all the nutrition it

needs, an excessive number of calories may be consumed, resulting in fatty tissue. Now if willpower prevailed and the craving were ignored, more serious results could prevail. When a craving for food is ignored, the body goes on to use the stored tissue, a little fat, but

also muscle tissue, as this breaks down more easily.

If the starvation continues, the brain slows the metabolism and less food is needed to exist, making it harder to lose weight.

This is not, however, where it ends, because usually if people ignore hunger signals long

enough, they stop knowing when they are hungry, and if you don't know when you are hungry, it becomes easier to continue starving and not seeing the weight loss, and it may also lead to overeating. Both of these conditions are the start of a difficult pattern of eating disorders.

So what can you do? If cravings are answered, but with highly nutritious foods, for example air-popped popcorn instead of chips, or crackers instead of chocolate, then not only are the amounts of calories, fats, and cholesterol lowered, but the vitamins and minerals are being consumed. The craving will go away; it will just take longer. If this is coupled with regular exercise, the body will be able to consume more, resulting in a greater need for calories, for digestion along. What a great system; you can eat more, as long as it is relatively high in nutrition and low in calories, and still lose weight.

In conclusion; denial will never be the answer, and so what if you cheat once in a while? As long as you increase exercise it'll wear off. It's only one meal out of all the meals you'll ever eat.

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