

How to Stop Snacking on Salty Stuff

by Pamela Fay

A 1960s Lay's potato chip ad taunted the chip lover with the slogan: "Betcha can't eat just one." If you can stop at one serving, or just a single ounce, you demonstrate better self control than the hard-core chip junkie. According to former-FDA commissioner, Dr. David Kessler, foods like chips, that are high in salt, alter the brain's chemistry causing us to overeat. And food manufacturers use this knowledge to our detriment. (ref 1). If you want to give up the chip or pretzel munching habit, you'll have to change your ways.

Clean your cupboards. Throw away all of the salty snacks. If you don't have them in your house (or office), you are less likely to go out and get them when the urge to snack strikes. Don't forget to throw out the stash in your desk drawer at work. Also, if you carry spare change or a few dollars for the vending machine, empty your wallet, as well.

Cut down on your salt consumption. The more salt you eat, the less you taste. Replace salt with other herbs and seasonings in your cooking. Buy unsalted and low-sodium foods. In a few weeks, you will notice you don't miss the salt. It takes times for your body to adjust to lower sodium levels, but if you are patient, you will notice other flavors in your food and you will not want as much salt. If you try your favorite chips after cleaning your diet, they will seem too salty.

Shop the perimeter of the grocery store. You can give up chips and pretzels easily if you find healthy snack replacements. Head, first, to the produce department. Hard, crunchy vegetables can help curb the need to chew. Celery is naturally high in sodium and may satisfy the salt craving without adding many calories. You can eat an entire pound of celery, or about 10 stalks, for around 60 calories. Six potato chips would yield an equal number of calories but far less fiber and satisfying crunch time. If celery, cucumbers, cauliflower and carrots don't appeal to you, try fruit or low-fat yogurt.

Replace salty snacking with a hobby that occupies your hands. If you like to sit in front of the television and mindlessly eat salty pretzels, give up the habit with knitting needles, Sudoku puzzles, or a sketch book. As you complete each task, you will feel a sense of accomplishment that you will never get from reaching the bottom of a pretzel bag.

Turn off the television and venture off the sofa. Give up potato chips and burn excess energy at the same time. Go outside; walk around the block with your children, fly a kite, pull some weeds, pick wild berries... and breathe deeply. Boredom can cause you to munch salty snacks just to engage your senses.

References

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