



"Just a Small Bite!"

Dr. Charles Shaffer

A patient recently brought my attention to Genesis chapter 3, verse 1 through 6:

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, `You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, `You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Many of us know how the rest of the story goes. In many versions, it says the fruit looked appealing to Eve. There was a reference point where Eve must have thought, "the fruit does look enticing". How many times have we eaten something just because it looked enticing?

WHAT YOU'LL FIND
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Restaurants and food manufacturers spend millions of dollars to hopefully entice us enough to consume food that is normally deemed unhealthy. For example, more pizzas are ordered during the Super Bowl than any other football game. It is the presentation of food that makes us reach for things we should not.

Articles in the Obesity Journal laid out some interesting biochemistry and psychology. One of the subjects they studied were addictions. Addiction to food is very much real and is classified the same as a substance abuse addiction. The same care and tactics for overcoming a narcotic addiction is used in overcoming a food addiction. The science of food addiction has established that highly palatable foods, including those of low nutritional value and high caloric intake, make up the majority of the standard American diet. The biochemistry effect concerning the brain share the same characteristics of substance abuse; it literally activates the same areas that cocaine, methamphetamine, and narcotics does.

Our attachment to junk food comes from its availability. It is legal, cheap, and socially acceptable. Therefore, it becomes “the drug of choice” and leads people to forming a habit or addiction. This characteristic behavior is compulsive despite the known negative health effects and social consequences. Over time patients can also develop a tolerance and need to eat more or try different, sugary foods. So instead of eating two doughnuts, you eat six.

Many patients experienced the taste of junk food or desserts and the feeling of intense demand from our brain: “more”. The amount of pleasure we derive from eating food of certain quality correlates with the amount of dopamine released in the brain. Dopamine is the neurochemical responsible for regulating motivation, pleasure and reinforcement related to certain stimuli such as the food groups you likely turn to.

So, how does dopamine really work? Here’s what we know: compared to lean individuals, those who are obese have fewer dopaminergic receptors known as “D2 receptors”. These receptors reward response and can be the cause for overeating. Overeating can blunt the dopaminergic reward response which in turn can result in more overeating. A noteworthy study revealed that women who had gained a significant amount of weight over six months had also reduced their dopaminergic response to palatable foods over the same time period. These results suggest overeating diminishes reward from these foods, driving further overeating and weight gain. However, in an interesting twist, when shown pictures of palatable foods the dopaminergic reward is actually enhanced. This is why restaurants spend a great deal of time making their menus look desirable.

The “just one bite” doesn’t work because a single bite activates the reward system causing the brain to demand more. Will power, logic, and common sense are compared as no match for addiction.

Be vigilant this holiday season regarding your food choices. Stick to foods that provide nourishment and substance. Say “no thank you” to foods that will make you lose control.

As we move from Thanksgiving to Christmas, I am starting to see people return with a 5 to 10 pound weight gain. However, many have lost weight and are very proud of themselves as they should be. You can certainly do the same. Remember, food can be a weapon against your well-being. Learn to stand strong and call on others to help.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,
Chuck Shaffer MD

Have Your Cup and Lose Weight Too!

Tricia Foley, MS, RDN, CLT

The cold weather is here! Staying warm with a hot cup of coffee is such a treat but with a low carb diet, knowing which cup of joe is right for you can be challenging. If you love coffee do not fear, we have you covered! Let's take a look at the options:

Black coffee: Black coffee although bitter, is essentially calorie free and will keep you warm and focused to get your day started. It also packs a lot of punch when it comes to your health check out these benefits from the American Heart Association:

- Caffeinated black coffee boosts energy and may help you lose weight and sharpen your mental focus. Studies have shown that caffeine may improve mood and have more brain power.
- Drinking coffee on a regular basis is associated with a lower risk of Type 2 diabetes and Parkinson's disease
- Coffee is a great source of antioxidants.
- Higher consumption of coffee – caffeinated and decaf – was associated with a reduced risk of mortality, including deaths related to heart disease, nervous system diseases and suicide.
- Habitual coffee drinking has been linked to a lower risk of coronary heart disease in women.

Flavored coffee: Flavored coffee is NOT the same as adding syrups to coffee like you find in many coffee shops. These coffees (bought at grocery stores) actually have oils and spices that are added to the bean before the roasting process, this adds flavor without calories or more importantly, sugar!

*One caution, avoid drinking these in high quantities. This is because they use Propylene Glycol, a solvent to help bind the flavor to the bean during the roasting process. It's fine in reasonable quantities (1-2 cups/day) too much can increase your exposure to toxins.

Coffee with heavy cream: If you find that you still need a creamy sidekick to your coffee that's okay too, just don't be fooled! Heavy whipping cream is not the same as half and half. While it's important to avoid half and half while on this program, adding two tablespoons of heavy cream can substitute for coffee creamer and is quite delicious. Heavy cream is a fat so it's important to measure it. Adding a little extra Stevia may also help to add sweetness while keeping you on track.

Coffee with Grass-Fed Butter: Butter in coffee may not be something you're familiar with but some research suggests that adding butter to your coffee can boost energy, focus, and brain power. If you do try this, limit it to 1 tablespoon and count it as a fat serving.

Bulletproof Coffee: If you're craving a latte, bulletproof coffee may be a good substitute on occasion. It combines a Medium Chain Triglyceride (MCT) oil like coconut oil and butter to create a creamy consistency similar to that of a latte. Adding 1 tablespoon of butter and 1 tablespoon of oil is just enough. Keep in mind that this is a high calorie drink and should be limited to support weight loss progress. There are some health claims associated with bulletproof coffee such as maintaining energy levels in the morning, improved mental focus and less hunger, however the jury is still out on the validity of these claims.

Bottom Line: If you love coffee, there is probably a low carb friendly cup that is right for you! Always take time to investigate the ingredients and steer clear of syrups and artificial chemically based sweeteners like aspartame. We have included some of our favorite Weigh Station friendly flavored coffees below:

Volcania Coffee: A medium roast, all natural ingredients no sugar and no calories. Some flavors offered include:

- Creme Brûlée
- Pumpkin Spice
- French Vanilla

Mauds- Come in K-cups all sugar free Flavors such as:

- Hottie Biscotti
- Sister Hazel(nut)
- French Toast roast

Cameron's Coffee is also a great choice for flavored coffee: Examples include:

- Highlander Grog
- Jamaican me Crazy
- Toasted Southern Pecan

The Recipe of the Month

Crab Soup

6 servings

- 4 lbs. crab (legs)
- 8 C water
- 8 C chicken stock
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 1/2 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, quartered
- 1/2 Tbsp parsley
- 2 tsp mustard seed
- 1/2 tsp coarse ground pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 Tbsp heavy whipping cream
- 1/4 C unsalted butter
- 1/4 tsp thyme
- 1/8 tsp basil

Directions

Remove all the crab meat from the shells and set it aside. Put half of the shells into a large pot with water and chicken stock; heat on high. Add onion, 1 stalk of celery and garlic and bring to a boil. Boil on low for 1 hour, stirring occasionally.

Strain and keep the liquid only. Pour 12 cups of the stock into a large sauce pan or cooking pot and bring to a boil. Add half of the crab and other ingredients that are left and bring back to a boil.

Reduce heat and cook on low heat for 4 hours uncovered until it reduces by about half and begins to visibly thicken. Add the rest of the crab; allow to cook on low heat one hour.

**Let's Get
Cooking!**

