



Food Addiction Reset

WHY FOOD ADDICTION COULD BE HARDER TO RECOVER FROM THAN DRUG ADDICTION

For many reasons, food addiction may be more difficult to put into remission than drug addiction. Due to availability, lots of triggers, misinformation, and skills required for recovery, food addiction can be a tough disease to overcome. There are many reasons why the 'weight-loss' approach might have failed.

Processed foods and relapse triggers are everywhere.

Addictive foods are everywhere. They are available at home, workplaces, along with our roads, at our entertainment and sports events, faith organizations, and shopping venues. They are much easier to get than recreational drugs.

- Household members may pressure the recovering food addict to keep processed foods in the house. Food addicts agree because they feel guilty about 'depriving' others of processed foods.
- Addictive foods are woven into our family, social and business traditions. People may push them on us.
- Visual triggers from overuse of processed foods are present in recovery. Heroin addicts can avoid the triggering sight of needles, but food addicts cannot avoid the sight of the knife, fork, plate, table, grocery store, etc

Our bodies and minds are susceptible.

- All of the major addictive brain pathways are activated by different processed foods. These include the opiate, dopamine, serotonin, endorphin, and endocannabinoid pathways. When many different substances are being used, the addiction is harder to put into remission. These pathways contain cells which are vulnerable to Pavlovian conditioning to crave.
- Food addiction can be made worse by dysfunction throughout the body including enzymes, peptides, hormones, and even bacteria growing in our guts.
- Food addiction is reinforced by survival instincts which encourage us to eat calorie-dense foods.
- Food addiction can start at a very young age. The younger an addiction starts, the harder it is to put into remission. The processed food industry targets children

The food industry, government, media, and schools promote food addiction.

- The processed food industry was owned by the tobacco industry for about 20 years. Tobacco executives are reported to have taught the food industry the value of making products addictive.
- The food industry pushes addictive foods through advertising, availability, and affordability.
- The food industry may add addictive formulations to our food without our knowledge.
- The food industry is 13 times bigger than the tobacco industry which means it has a powerful influence with government. Regulation of additives and labelling is ineffective.
- The US government subsidizes addictive crops such as sugar, wheat, and corn.
- Government regulations require schools to buy and serve addictive foods containing gluten and dairy.
- Media tells us we don't have time to cook and eating healthy is expensive. Media earns about \$10 billion per year from the food industry.
- Schools make addictive food and drinks available in the classroom, cafeteria, and vending machines. Teachers use coupons for addictive foods to reward students.
- Food addicts thus come into recovery with a tremendous amount of erroneous information gained in many cases from sources that the addict trusted. Letting go of misguided ideas adds to the burden of recovering from food addiction.

Processed foods have been shown to be addictive.

- Different processed foods are combined into 'poly-substance' use which is harder to treat than single-substance use. Fast food meals typically contain sweeteners, flour, gluten, processed fats, salt, dairy, and caffeinated drinks.
- Processed foods can be more addictive than recreational drugs. Sugar has been shown to reach the brain faster and more powerfully than cocaine when administered similarly. Rats choose sugar and saccharin over heroin and cocaine. High Fructose Corn Syrup has been shown to act on the body like corn alcohol.
- A withdrawal syndrome has been shown for processed fat and for packaged foods.
- Caffeine has several diagnoses in the Diagnostic Manual for Mental Illness published by the American Psychiatric Association.

- Dairy and gluten both contain a naturally occurring morphine that acts on the brain like opiates.

Expert help is hard to find.

- Health professionals commonly don't know how to treat food addiction.
- Training is unavailable to health professionals.
- Health professionals might advocate using addictive foods which could activate the disease.
- If food addiction is misdiagnosed as a weight-loss issue, addictive foods might have been introduced at goal weight, thus re-establishing the disease of food addiction.
- Food addiction may have damaged finances making treatment unaffordable.
- Food addiction can be misdiagnosed and mistreated as a weight problem.
- Food addiction may have been intensified by misguided treatment for weight-loss including restricted calorie dieting, weight-loss surgery, liquid diets, diet pills, etc.
- Dieticians are trained by the processed food industry to recommend the use of processed foods. Hospitals and health professionals may be required by law to rely on dieticians.
- Support groups may be misguided about best practices.
- Food addicts may be isolated and unable to find meaningful support.

Food addiction recovery requires skills.

- In spite of impaired learning, decision-making, and memory, food addicts must learn to follow a food plan.
- Food addicts need to learn how to set boundaries with family, colleagues, and friends. Loved ones and colleagues may try to sabotage recovery, unintentionally or otherwise.
- The adult food addict may be faced with caring for addicted children which is stressful.
- Taste functions may be impaired making non-addictive foods seem bland for the first few weeks.
- Food addicts may have debilitating physical, emotional, or mental diseases such as fatigue, depression, brain fog, heart disease, blindness, amputation, or obesity which may make it difficult to acquire the skills and meals needed for successful recovery.

- From this list, perhaps now clients can see why it is so difficult to control addictive overeating. However, also from this list, clients might already see what it might take to effectively overcome food addiction. Eliminating addictive foods, making beautiful meals, and avoiding triggers will be helpful. Learning techniques for repairing learning, decision-making, and memory functions will make all the difference to success.
- Given the forces at work in government, food and health industries, media, and schools, clients might see why it would be valuable to have expert guidance in developing a program to protect themselves and their loved ones from food addiction.
- Learning about food addiction in a comprehensive, year-long program could reshape clients' outlooks from one of illness to vitality.

