



Food Addiction Reset

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO RECOVER?

Goal: The goal of this Handout is to explore the reasons why it might take a full year to establish a successful and reliable program of recovery from processed foods.

Application: The application of the Handout is to help clients to become comfortable with the idea of a year-long program.

- An extended program is indicated for people who have a history of weight-loss/weight-gain cycles. The repeated failure of these regimens indicates the possibility that a more comprehensive program could be successful.
- The disease of processed food addiction is a challenging disease to treat under any circumstances because the addiction can begin in childhood with extensive and repeated exposure to processed foods at home, school, and fast-food outlets.
- Processed food addiction is considered to be a 'poly-substance' addiction because it combines a number of addictive foods with addictive properties. These include sugars, artificial sweeteners, flour, gluten, processed fats, excessive salt, and caffeine. Research shows that the more different substances being used, the more difficult it is to treat the addiction, and the more appropriate it is to use an extended program.
- Food addicts are likely to be triggered into cravings and relapse by reminders of processed foods. These foods are in widespread use and reminders are prominent. Contrast how much easier it would be to quit smoking because there are so few reminders found in our daily routines. Also there are so many fewer opportunities to buy cigarettes and they are expensive. In comparison, processed foods are everywhere and they're cheap. This availability makes recovering from food addiction harder and justifies a year-long program. A long-term program maximizes the opportunity to stabilize the brain sufficiently to recover from exposure to reminders and to implement routines to avoid triggers.
- To conquer processed food addiction, people may need to acquire a set of new skills for meal preparation. These skills include shopping, preparing, storing, and organizing meals. It's important to learn how to do this quickly, easily, inexpensively, and yet properly. A good meal system can be learned and fully integrated into lifestyle routines through the year-long program.

- Often, family members also need to recover from processed foods. Transitioning children to an unprocessed food plan can seem daunting. Breaking the process down into steps is a benefit from year-long support. Maintaining recovery from processed foods for the long term for children may involve educating caregivers in their environments. Establishing reliable routines is a benefit from spending a year in a recovery program.
- The program should fit into your daily life easily. Program that take place over a smartphone and computer may be best to minimize travel time and facilitate access to support in short moments throughout the day. A daily phone call can be helpful.
- Program fees should meet the client's budget.
- The long duration of the program means that there is no rush to accomplish particular tasks according to a schedule. This minimizes stress which is important as stress can activate food addiction.
- There's a lot to learn. Clients need time to acquire skills and reinforce them until they are solidly incorporated into the client's lifestyle. Client may also benefit from having time to learn about the science behind food addiction which will help clarify two important ideas: 1. the disease is not the client's fault, and 2. keeping the disease in remission does take specific actions such as clean eating and trigger avoidance.
- The pressure to relapse in food addiction is seasonal. Various holidays, anniversaries of important events, celebrations and birthdays can be powerful triggers to relapse. A year-long program will allow participants to experience these triggers with clean eating and set up new confidence for moving through events without relapse.
- Food addiction is a serious disease which can be put into remission reliably with enough time and the right approaches.