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News Release

## **Get a Grip on Food Cravings**

Do you ever think, “I know that I am full, but I still want something to eat?” That’s the moment food cravings kick into action. You begin searching for something sweet, or maybe for a salty snack or a creamy textured treat to satisfy your taste’s desire. Although sugar and salt have their health risks, craving fatty foods can lead to greater health perils. Research suggests that a preference for high-fat foods is developed when infants and young children learn to link fatty foods with the comforting luxury of overindulgence. The allure of high-fat foods comes from the enhanced flavor that fats give to foods. Think about the smooth, creamy texture of ice cream and peanut butter, the flaky, tender pastry or brownie that melts in your mouth or the juicy steak or hamburger. Studies show on-again, off-again dieting may step up a fat craving. Those cravings become a double jeopardy when they are rewarded with the sweet and fat laden ingredients of rich desserts. Additionally, many high-fat snacks are heavily seasoned with salt.

No matter what the reason for these cravings, you can overcome, or manage, your preference for fatty foods. The first line of defense is to slowly adjust to lower-fat foods. Trick your taste buds with smooth, creamy low-fat and fat-free ingredients such as low-fat yogurt in savory dips; thick, pureed fruit as a dessert sauce; and creamy buttermilk as a milk shake base. Instead of sautéing meat or vegetables in butter and oil, use a small amount of chicken broth or wine in place of the oil or butter. You can also substitute applesauce, pureed prunes, or low-fat yogurt for up to half the butter or oil in recipes for baked goods. Look for low-fat dairy products that are “whipped,” “slow-churned,” or “double- churned” for a satisfying taste. With salads, add a few olives, avocado slices, nuts or low-fat cheese to get a fat-fix without getting too many extra calories.

Fat-free is preferred when purchasing certain foods, but fat-free is not the body’s preference. Remember that a little fat in food adds more than flavor. It also helps satisfy hunger by making you feel full. This is because it takes fats a little longer to be processed in your stomach than carbohydrates and proteins. If you limit yourself to a very-low-fat meal, you may feel hungry again within an hour or two. USDA guidelines recommended 25-30 percent of the diet should come from fats. Aside from taste appeal, fat helps the body use the fat soluble vitamins—A, E, D and K.

For more information about this or other nutrition related topics please contact Jennifer Dutton at the St. Clair County Extension office by phone at (205) 338-9416 or email [jld0021@aces.edu](mailto:jld0021@aces.edu).

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