Craving busters – How to prevent stress cravings

Making healthy decisions may seem like a much less daunting task if you learn to prevent vulnerable, unplanned moments. We have all gone too long without eating, tried the “all or nothing” approach, avoided our favourite treat or even let our emotions dictate our decisions.

Cravings can set in at any moment and can often be hard to overcome; however, if you learn to identify when cravings set in and prevent these vulnerable times, you can set yourself up for success.

Can you identify times your life when you experience food cravings? What is it that you crave? Can you identify a similar cause as to why the craving might set in?

Food cravings can arise at many different times, but they are more common in certain situations. Here are some examples of why and when food cravings might set in:

1. Skipping a meal or snack: Intense hunger can lead to cravings, over-eating and making poor, unhealthy food choices.
2. Avoiding your favourite food for a period of time: Avoiding what you truly want will only make you want that food even more. Sometimes if you hold off long enough or distract yourself with a non-food related activity, you may be able to divert the craving.
3. Irregular meal pattern: The body likes consistency. When your circadian rhythm is out of whack, it may be tough to keep your body, mind and food cravings under control. Try to eat at the same time each and every day, and stock up on what the body really needs.
4. Lack of sleep: Poor sleep habits are associated with cravings and, in particular, foods for quick energy.
5. Emotions: Food can provide a pleasure sensation in the body and mind and therefore emotions can cause food cravings.
6. Keeping foods that are commonly associated with cravings: The sight or thought of specific foods can induce food cravings.
7. Denying your body the basics: Stick to your recommended food groups. Cutting out food groups or not getting enough of a food group can lead to cravings almost immediately.
8. Nutritional deficiency: Listen to your body. Sometimes you are craving foods because your body truly is deficient in a nutrient. Make sure you are getting the healthy foods your body needs and identify the habit if you are not. Learn to make healthy changes before a deficiency sets in.
9. Thirsty: Thirst can often be mistaken for hunger.
10. Restrictive “all or nothing” mindset: Telling yourself you want something but are not allowed to have it, can make you want it even more!