

NUTRITION (TOPICS/NUTRITION) | FROM THE APRIL 2016 ISSUE (ISSUE/APRIL-2016)

Junk Food, Why Can't I Quit You?



Sally Kuzemchak (author/sally)



Antonis Achilleos

We get it: Junk food is delish. After all, food manufacturers engineer it to be that way. They use flavor-enhancing chemicals and just the right amount of sugar and salt to get you to devour the whole bag—and still want more! But though a little junk is OK in an otherwise healthy day, too much can wreck your mood, your energy level, even your athletic performance. That's because most junk food is skimpy on the protein, fiber, and healthy fats that give you long-lasting energy.

To help you find equally delicious snacks with staying power, we asked teens for their junk food faves, then figured out how to better satisfy their cravings. Get excited to try our creations!

The junk food fave: Ice Cream

The Fix : *Creamy Fronanas.* In the morning, peel and slice up one ripe banana and put it on a plate in the freezer. When you get home from school, you can throw the slices in the blender with a tablespoon of peanut butter or a handful of strawberries. It seriously tastes just like ice cream!

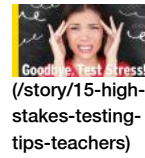


I love cookies-and-cream ice cream, and I eat it while reading a book on my phone or watching TV.

The Payoff: There are a mind-blowing 10 teaspoons of sugar in a cup of cookies-and-cream ice cream, which will send you into a post-sugar slump after eating it. But rich and creamy bananas have natural sugar that won't lead to an energy crash—plus 3 grams of fiber to keep you feeling fuller longer. (Bonus: Bananas are loaded with the mineral potassium



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watching TV. Its my reward for finishing my homework."
 - Ebon Kalejaiye, a ninth-grader in California

loaded with the mineral potassium, which can help prevent cramps when you exercise!)



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The junk food fave:

Doritos



"I eat Doritos whenever I can—like when I'm studying, or at lunch. I love the cheesy flavor and the crunch."
 - Ibn Williamson, an 11th-grader in Ohio

The Fix: **Crispy Quesadilla.** Pop a whole-wheat tortilla into the toaster oven until lightly browned. Top with 1/4 cup shredded cheddar and fat-free refried beans, then heat the whole thing for a minute, or until the cheese is melted. Fold in half, cut into wedges, and dip into salsa.

The Payoff: Doritos are full of artificial flavors, fake food dyes, and multiple flavor enhancers. You'll be more satisfied by real food. Actual cheese is rich in calcium and also protein, so you can eat less but still feel full. And surprise: Salsa counts as a serving of vegetables!



The junk food fave: Kit Kat



"After school I stop at the 7-Eleven to buy a king-size Kit Kat. I love the chocolate and the crunch."
 - Celia Yesunas, an eighth-grader in Virginia

The Fix: **Chocolate-Drizzled Apple Nachos.** Slice an apple and arrange the slices on a plate. In a small dish, microwave 2 tablespoons of natural peanut butter and 1 tablespoon of chocolate chips for 10 seconds. Stir and drizzle over the apple slices, then top with granola or shredded coconut.

The Payoff: Candy bars offer little besides calories. These apple nachos may taste like dessert, but they contain fiber for fullness and some vitamin C, which helps your body fight off colds. Plus the peanut butter's protein can help rebuild your muscles after exercise!



MORE CURES FOR YOUR CRAVINGS!

These superior swaps will satisfy every kind of hunger.

YOU WANT:

Sweet
like sugary candy



TRY:

Frozen Grapes
Before school, rinse and de-stem a bunch of grapes. Place them in a freezer-safe bag and lay them flat in the freezer. They'll be ready to eat by the time you get home!



PAYOFF:

Candy is crammed with sugar that gives you a quick boost followed by a serious slump. Grapes are sweet but won't cause an energy crash!

Crispy & salty
like greasy potato chips



DIY Microwave Popcorn
Mix 1/3 cup popcorn kernels with 1 teaspoon oil; pour into paper bag. Heat in microwave on high for two minutes, or until popping slows. Sprinkle with a little Parmesan cheese.



Potato chips are nutritional zeros. But popcorn is a natural whole grain, full of fiber that will fill you up fast.

Cold & rich,
like an ice cream sandwich



Fro-Yo Bark
Spread vanilla yogurt on a baking sheet lined with wax paper. Sprinkle with sliced fruit, chocolate chips, or nuts. Freeze until firm, then break into pieces. Store leftovers in a container in the freezer.



Compared with yogurt, ice cream has far less calcium, a mineral you desperately need because your bones are still growing.

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