

Top 5 'Bad' Foods -- and Healthy Foods Substitutes



By eDiets Staff

Oops

Oops, I did it again... If you sing that song whenever you eat a certain food, consider it a "trigger" food. Translation: Don't derail your diet goals by eating foods you have a history of overeating.

Easier said than done? Here are the three steps to managing those **not-so-healthy foods**:

1. Recognize your triggers. For me, it's always been ice cream. I would buy a carton of fudge vanilla swirl, for example, planning to limit myself to just a half cup for dessert. I'd dig into the creamy mixture, have "just a taste" -- and all my plans went into the trash. Along with the empty half-gallon carton of ice cream. Inevitably, I felt sick the next day and mad at myself for giving in. I'd try setting up rules ("I'll only eat ice cream on weekends," or "I'll only eat vanilla ice cream -- that's safe and boring"), but those rules were a game of deception that resulted only in weight gained.

2. Accept which ones are "danger zone" foods. If you are unable to limit yourself to a single serving, it's a "red light" food for you.

3. After you recognize your trigger foods, discover safe healthy foods substitutes. And for help with this critical third step, check out my list below!

Trigger Food #1: Ice Cream



Is ice cream one of your trigger foods? Then keep those half-gallon containers out of your house. Instead, consider one of these healthy foods options:

-- Stop eating ice cream. Period. Instead, call around to local frozen yogurt shops until you find one that serves **sugar-free, low-calorie frozen yogurt**. Check to make sure that it's really low-calorie (for example, one of the yogurt cafes in my hometown has frozen yogurt that is 10 calories per ounce). Rather than take it home, order a small serving at the cafe, and enjoy it there. -- Buy pre-portioned, sugar-free frozen treats, such as sugar-free **Fudgsicles**. Just 40 calories each, with calcium, protein and no sugar, these individually-wrapped chocolate fudge frozen treats are one of my **favorite healthy foods** for after-dinner desserts.

Trigger Food #2: Baked Potatoes



I used to consider myself virtuous for ordering a baked potato instead of French fries at a restaurant. Of course, I always opted for the variety stuffed with melted cheese and butter and topped with sour cream. And I couldn't understand why I didn't lose weight. Answer: Those enormous potatoes served in restaurants actually are the **equivalent of two to four servings**. Add in those high-calorie, high-fat extras like cheese, butter and sour cream, and you're looking at a so-called side course that can have more calories and fat than you've budgeted for your entire dinner!

Healthy foods substitutes:

-- Steamed vegetables. Skip the butter and cheese topping and sprinkle on some herbs. -- A baked potato or yam that you **share with a friend** -- and substitute plain yogurt for that fattening topping.

Trigger Food #3: Pizza



"I'm just going to have one piece," you promise yourself. Then the delivery person arrives at your front door. You open up the box and that fragrance wafts through the room. One piece leads to another... and then of course there's the garlic bread on the side. Before you know it, your diet is out the door along with the empty pizza box container.

Healthy foods substitute:

-- A whole-grain **English muffin** half. Top with fat-free or low-fat mozzarella cheese and tomato sauce mixed with herbs, and put under the broiler until the cheese melts. You've got the flavor of pizza without the calories and fat!

Trigger Food #4: Pie



Yes, I know, apple pie is as traditional as baseball. And it counts as a fruit serving, right? Hah! When you mix sugar and butter with those apples, then make that crust with lard and more sugar, and top the whole conglomeration off with whipped cream or extra-rich vanilla ice cream, you're creating a recipe for diet trouble.

Healthy foods substitutes:

-- One-half cup of **unsweetened applesauce** mixed with a half-cup of sugar-free vanilla yogurt and 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon. -- A plain baked apple sprinkled with cinnamon and a packet of sugar-free sweetener, such as Splenda or Equal.

Trigger Food #5: Cheese



One ounce of cheese is only about the size of a domino -- and can pack as much as 130 calories. Consider just how much cheese you can tuck away for a snack. Add on the calories in the accompanying crackers. And you've just consumed more calories in your supposedly innocent snack than you might have allotted for a half-day of food on your diet!

Healthy foods substitute:

-- Individually pre-packaged "light" or fat-free cheese, such as individually wrapped **low-fat string cheese**.

Do you have any healthy foods you eat when you're craving something bad? Help us out and share your ideas!