The smoke from this season’s wildfires has been hard to avoid if you enjoy spending summer days outdoors. The following tips from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention will help protect your health from the wildfire smoke all around us.

**Check local air quality reports.** Listen and watch for health warnings on your local news, radio stations or go to [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov).

**Consult local visibility guides.** Follow state guidelines to help you determine if there are high levels of particulate in the air.

**Keep indoor air as clean as possible.** Keep your windows and doors closed. Run an air conditioner but keep the fresh-air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent outdoor smoke from getting inside.

**Avoid activities that increase indoor pollution.** Burning candles or using a gas stove can increase indoor pollution. Also, vacuuming can stir up particles that are present in your home.

**Follow your healthcare providers advice.** If you have asthma or another lung disease, follow a respiratory management plan that was provided by your healthcare provider. Call your doctor if symptoms worsen.

**Do not rely on dust masks for protection.** These paper masks will not protect your lungs from the small wildfire particles. They are designed to trap large particles like sawdust.

Visit the [Wildfire Smoke Factsheet](https://www.cdc.gov/features/wildfires/index.html) to find out how you can further protect yourself. Hopefully, the smoke will clear out soon so that you can safely enjoy Idaho’s great outdoors again.

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Sendy Martinez
Ada County Extension Program Coordinator

Source: [https://www.cdc.gov/features/wildfires/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/features/wildfires/index.html)
Stop Emotional Eating Patterns by Learning New Habits

You feel stressed out. You are bored. Or you are angry at your spouse. So, you walk to the kitchen and look for a solution. Is it a bag of chips? Last night’s lasagna? That pint of premium ice cream in the freezer? Stopping an emotional eating habit has more to do with mindfulness than it does with portion control.

Stress can trigger unhealthy snacking patterns. To short circuit emotional eating, identify what triggers the behavior and adopt ways to divert to healthier foods and habits. Here are some strategies on how to stop stress eating:

**Substitute your stress snacks:** Have substitutes at hand for your “go to” emotional eating foods. Portion out handfuls of baby carrots or apple slices in plastic baggies and keep them in the front of the fridge where you can grab them quickly.

**Chew gum when you’re triggered to eat:** Keep some flavored chewing gums at hand, preferably sugarless versions. These can help because they involve chewing, an essential part of the eating experience.

**Relax:** Some people find having a hot shower or a soak in a tub can be helpful. Another strategy is creating a playlist or CD of your favorite music.

**Be mindful:** Meditation-based mindfulness training, widely available, helps you to become more aware of your eating triggers and behaviors, enjoy your food more, and stop when you are satiated.

**Exercise rather than eat:** Going out for a walk or jog can be helpful. Others may find relief with yoga or tai chi. Or go to your health club.

**Shift your attention elsewhere:** Mentally distract yourself from cravings by playing solitaire or a computer game, catching up on social media and news, knitting or other hobby activities, or organizing a messy closet.

**Why Is Emotional Eating A Problem?**
Trigger, craving, action—this is the dynamic of emotional eating. It’s a potent trio because it taps the brain’s powerful ability to form deeply ingrained habits based on repeated experience. Using food to extinguish emotional states or “triggers” can lead to weight gain and unhealthy eating patterns.

“The brain learns by association,” says Susan B. Roberts, PhD, director of Tufts’ HNRCA Energy Metabolism Laboratory. “And some of us form these unfortunate associations between emotional triggers and eating unhealthy food.”

But the brain is also very good at learning new strategies. Once you identify the triggers, then you can determine what you are going to do instead. Breaking a dysfunctional habit really means pasting a new habit over the top of the bad one.

**Connect Emotional Eating Habits to Their Trigger Points.**
An emotional eating habit forms when a stimulus connects to a behavior. “In the beginning you do it by accident,” Roberts says. You happen to have chocolate when you’re stressed, and it makes you feel better. Then your brain forms these connections that can be hard to get rid of. So, spend some time observing yourself as you slip into emotional eating behavior. What kicks off the process?

Some other possible triggers of emotional eating include anxiety, anger, loneliness, depression, fear, procrastination, or boredom. Even positive emotions, like excitement or desire, can be triggers.

Being aware of triggers is a way of getting out of the “autopilot” state of mind that leads to emotional eating. Once autopilot is turned off, you can start to develop healthier responses to cravings.

**Being Too Hard on Yourself Makes Stress Eating Worse.**
The key is not to be judgmental about the problem—it doesn’t help. Accepting where you are is a big part of the solution because self-criticism leads to discomfort that can trigger more emotional eating. If you find that your substitute behavior does not work, it’s not that you’re hopeless and it’s never going to work, it’s just that the substitute you tried wasn’t the right one. Keep at it until you find something that will work.

Source: *Tufts Health & Nutrition Letter, December 2017*
Six Strategies to Help You Say No to Junk Food

Our environment is saturated in calories—cheap, tempting, and unnecessary calories. Try these strategies to help you resist the flood of junk food fighting for your attention.

1. Don’t let yourself get too hungry. If you’re too hungry, “your gut signals tell the reward system in your brain, ‘You need to really be on the lookout and respond intensely to any food cues you see,’” says Ashley Gearhardt, assistant professor of psychology at the University of Michigan. Her advice: Skip the crash diets and “focus on the quality of the food you eat.” Junk food can override your satiety signals.

2. Don’t drink your calories. Sugary drinks—soda, sports drinks, energy drinks, or sweetened teas—lead to weight gain. It’s not clear why. One possibility: liquid calories may not “register.”

3. Find foods that don’t cause war. Hungry between meals? Try fresh fruit or carrots with hummus. Try to identify foods that you enjoy but that don’t cause an intense internal struggle (“I’m only going to have one bite of this, but oh I want more”). That’s exhausting—the willpower parts of our brain can only take so much. Fruits and vegetables are unlikely to override your satiety signals.

4. Address your stress. Stress can be a huge cue. Notice the emotional triggers that set you up to crave certain foods. Go for a walk, call a friend, try some meditation, or distract yourself. “The craving will peak and then go down if you don’t give in to it,” says Gearhardt. “When we’re stressed, the executive control system in the brain (the signal to stop eating) is weakened. Stopping ourselves from doing things we want is taxing and energy intense. When we’re stressed, there isn’t as much energy for that.”

5. Get enough sleep. When researchers let people sleep only four hours a night for five days, they ate more and gained weight. In similar studies, “participants reported increased hunger,” says Erin Hanlon, assistant professor in the department of medicine at the University of Chicago. “And their appetite was greatest for high-carbohydrate or high-fat foods.

6. Give yourself a break. “I ask people to have some compassion for themselves, because it is really hard,” says Gearhardt. “Our food environment is set up to make it hard for people to eat healthier.”

Source: Nutrition Action Health Letter, May 2018

Because You Asked:

Q. I take fish oil for heart health, but some of what I read in the health press says fish oil doesn’t do much. Should I stop taking it?

A. Alice H. Lichtenstein, DSc, director of Tufts’ HNRCA Cardiovascular Nutrition Laboratory answers: “Current recommendations do not support the use of fish oil supplements to prevent heart disease in otherwise healthy adults. But the recommendations do support a healthy dietary pattern that includes fish (seafood) at least twice a week. There is little evidence that taking fish oil supplements instead of eating fish is beneficial, and by doing so you will be losing out on some other benefits of including fish in your diet.

“One of those benefits comes from eating darker-fleshed fish like salmon and trout, which contain higher amounts of heart-healthy unsaturated fats than other species. However, including any type of seafood in your diet is highly recommended if it replaces major contributors of saturated fat, such as burgers or a piece of quiche.

“As with any effort to improve diet quality, also consider the way you prepare the seafood. Avoid butter and cream sauces. Instead, use spices and herbs liberally and serve the seafood with lots of colorful vegetables, either included in the preparation of the seafood or separately.”

Q. I’ve often heard that sweet potatoes are healthier than white potatoes. Is that true?

A. Kelly Kane, MS, RD, director of nutrition and business operations at the Frances Stern Nutrition Center at Tufts Medical Center, responds: “Sweet potatoes have some potential nutritional advantages over ordinary white potatoes. They are much higher in beta-carotene, for example. Sweet potatoes also tend to be higher in fiber than white potatoes, especially if you eat the skin. So sweet potatoes are a great alternative to white potatoes and are a healthier choice.

“Potatoes tend to raise blood sugar more quickly than non-starchy vegetables, such as broccoli and cauliflower. For that reason, sweet potatoes should serve as a starch in meals, replacing foods such as rice or pasta. That can be a confusing message for some people because potatoes are a vegetable (which Americans don’t eat enough of), but it should be perceived as the starch in your meal because the body will metabolize it like a starchy grain.”

Source: Tufts Health & Nutrition Letter, April 2018
MULTI-COLOR BLACK BEAN & BARLEY SALAD

Packed with vibrant colors and contrasting textures, this naturally nutrient-dense salad makes a tasty and economical summer side dish.

- 3/4 cup quick-cooking barley
- 1 cup water
- 1 1/4 cups frozen corn niblets
- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 1/3 cup cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup olive oil or canola oil
- 1 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 tsp hot sauce, or to taste
- 1/4 tsp salt, or to taste
- 1 1/2 cups cooked dried black beans
- 1 Large red bell pepper, diced
- 1/2 cup chopped scallions
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro or parsley
- 2 avocado
- 1 lime

1. Combine barley and water in small saucepan. Bring to a simmer. Cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer until barley is tender and most of the liquid has been absorbed, 10 to 12 minutes. Fluff with a fork; let cool.

2. Meanwhile, cook corn according to package directions. Drain & cool.

3. Combine orange juice, vinegar, oil, cumin, oregano, garlic, hot sauce, and salt in small bowl or jar with a tight-fitting lid; whisk or shake to blend.

4. Combine barley, corn, beans, bell pepper, scallions, and cilantro in large bowl. Add dressing and toss to coat well. (Salad will keep in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.)

5. Just before serving, garnish with avocado, if desired. Serve with lime wedges.

Serves 8. Per serving (3/4-cup) without avocado: Calories: 170; Total fat: 8 g; Saturated fat: 1 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Sodium: 260 mg; Total carbohydrates: 22 g; Fiber: 5 g; Added sugars: 0 g; Protein: 5 g.

BLACK BEANS & QUINOA WITH ROASTED PEPPERS

- 2 red or yellow bell peppers
- 1 poblano or green bell pepper
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbs. lemon juice
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- 1 scallion, minced

- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- 1 15 oz. can no-salt-added black beans, drained & rinsed

1. Cut the peppers in half lengthwise. Place them skin side up on a lined baking sheet. Broil until blistered and charred in places, 10-12 minutes. When cool enough to handle, peel off the skin and dice the peppers.

2. In a large bowl, whisk together the oil, lemon juice, salt, and oregano. Mix in the peppers and all the remaining ingredients.

Serves 4. Per serving (1 cup): Calories: 270; Total fat: 12 g; Sat fat: 1.5 g; Carbs: 31 g; Fiber: 8 g; Total sugar: 4 g; Added sugar:

LENTIL SALAD WITH MUSSTARD VINAIGRETTE

- ½ cup dry French lentils
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- 4 cups salad greens
- 1 cup cooked diced beets
- ½ cup cooked diced butternut squash
- ¾ cup roasted, salted sunflower seeds

1. Simmer the lentils with the bay leaf in enough water to cover by ½ inch until just tender, 12-15 min. Drain & cool.

2. Make the Mustard Vinaigrette dressing.

3. Toss the lentils, quinoa, and salad greens in the dressing. Top with the beets, squash, & sunflower seeds.

Mustard Vinaigrette (Makes 4½ Tbs.)

- 1 Tbs. red wine or sherry vinegar
- 1 Tbs. whole-grain mustard
- ½ tsp. Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp. honey
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil

In a large bowl, whisk together all the ingredients.

Serves 2. Per serving (3 cups salad with 2¼ Tbs. dressing): Calories: 580; Total fat: 25 g; Sat fat: 3 g; Carbs: 70 g; Fiber: 17 g; Total sugar: 13 g; Added sugar: 1 g; Protein: 23 g; Sodium: 630 mg.