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Kill Cravings With These Foods



Jupiter Images

By Amy Paturel, M.S., M.P.H.

If you just can't curb the urge to wolf down chocolate or cookies, you should head straight to the kitchen. That's right. Because even though mindless noshing packs on the pounds like no other pastime, some foods can make a definite dent in your need to nibble.

According to registered dietitian Milton Stokes, eating low-calorie, fiber-rich foods before a meal (salads, soup and fruits) may prevent a dieter from submitting to an all out gorge-fest. But some of the best appetite killers are nibbles that might be hiding in plain sight in your kitchen right now:

Nuts: New research shows the fatty acids in pine nuts initiate the release of an appetite-suppressing hormone called cholecystokinin (CKK). According to Stokes, it's too soon to tell if these results will stand up. In the meantime, sprinkle pine nuts on your salad or mix them into pesto over whole wheat pasta. Want a more accessible nut? Try almonds. People who consume these nutrient powerhouses lose more weight and fat mass than those who don't. Why? The cell walls of almonds seem to act as a physical barrier to the total absorption of fat.

Hot Stuff: Spicy foods have a metabolism-boosting benefit and can dull your taste buds so you're apt to eat less. Even foods that are hot in temperature -- like tea and soup -- may diminish your appetite. Just make sure your soup is tomato or broth-based (not cream!) and your tea isn't of the sugary variety (beware commercial flavored types like Chai). In fact, if you go green, your tea may actually give your metabolism a boost, too.

Apples: Apples pack a lot of fiber -- twice as much in every bite as peaches, grapes and grapefruit. Fiber helps turn on the fullness switch and prevents you from overeating. Get into the habit of eating an apple before dinner. Chances are, you'll eat less of your meal as the fiber starts to kick in.

Milk: Research shows that dairy foods promote weight loss, but the mechanism isn't fully understood

yet. "It looks like calcium helps break down the fat in cells," says Stokes. "But getting calcium from real dairy foods, like low-fat or nonfat milk or yogurt, help more than taking supplements."

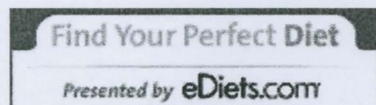
Green Leaves: Two cups of cabbage, celery or lettuce provides almost no calories. And in most cases, you burn off the greens just by digesting them. Pickles and cucumbers count in this category, too.

If snacking doesn't do the trick, sniffing might. According to Alan Hirsch, M.D., neurological director of the Smell and Taste Research Foundation in Chicago, just a whiff of green apple, banana and peppermint might help you drop some weight.

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