

## Beware of the **Booby Traps!**

**Background:** Many of our eating habits are due to the impulsive nature of humans. Our mind can play tricks on us, making us consume more than we otherwise would. It is very common for people to eat with their eyes. In other words if someone sees food, they are more likely to eat it. However, if we keep foods “out of sight and out of mind”, we will consume less of that food. Another booby trap that can cause us to eat less healthy food is the amount of effort it takes to get the food. We naturally prefer the more convenient foods, which unfortunately are usually not very healthy. Warehouse club stores such as BJ’s or Sam’s Club make foods very convenient. The jumbo size packaging of the food can cause us to over eat, and many times people waste the food once they are sick of it. There are steps that we can take to avoid these traps.

### Objectives:

- Explain how simply seeing or smelling a food we like can make us feel hungrier and ultimately eat more.
- Understand how convenience impacts our eating habits.
- Identify the dangers of the “Club Store Curse” and highlight the steps that we can take to avoid the curse.

## Index



### Fun Choices for Activities:

- Thee SEE-FOOD Diet... “Out of Sight – Out of Mind”- Demonstrates that simply seeing or being reminded of a food can bring about strong cravings.
- Convenient Cues- Explains the role of convenience in our food choices/
- The Club Store Curse- Shows students how shopping in bulk might not be the smartest option.



### Frequently Asked Questions:

- FAQ’s about the See-Food Diet
- FAQ’s about Convenient Cues



### Additional Information:

- Extended Background
- Useful Resources



### Handouts and Tip sheets:

- Quick Tips handout
- Worksheets 1 & 2

**Title: *The See-Food Diet... Out of Sight - Out of Mind***

**Background Information:** Out of sight is out of mind. If tempting food sits on your desk or in the kitchen in plain sight, you consistently have to make a heroic decision whether you will resist the temptation to eat or give in to the delicious temptress. The more you see a food, the harder it is to resist the urge to eat even if you aren't hungry. So if you have a glass jar of chocolates in your kitchen or living room, you are prone to eat more than you even want to. There are steps that can be taken to make the see-food diet work for you and help you to eat healthy food more often.

**Objectives:**

- Explain how simply seeing or smelling a food we like can make us feel hungrier and ultimately eat more.
- Determine ways to make food less convenient.
- Develop strategies to make the see-food diet work in the student's favor.

**Materials:**

- At least one package of sour skittles or sour patch kids
- Slide show or overheads

Outline	Activities
<p><b>Lesson Starter:</b></p> <p><i>Do you really want it?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the students if they think that just seeing or thinking about a food can make us hungry.</li> <li>• Next show the class a package of sour skittles or sour patch kids. Then ask the students how many of them salivated or could almost taste the sour sensation from just seeing the candy?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Content:</b></p> <p>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give the class some background information.</li> <li>• Explain the importance and relevance of the objectives</li> </ul>

<p><b>Activity 1: What’s your favorite meal?</b></p>  <p><i>Student will realize that they can be prompted to desire a certain food.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show a provided slide show or overhead of delicious looking food displays to the students.</li> <li>• Then ask the students: if you could have any food or drink you desired right now what would you have? Have them write down their answers.</li> <li>• Poll the class to see who chose a food or drink from the slide show. You can also poll to see how many students would choose a fast food, or unhealthy products.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity 2: “Souper” See-Food</b></p>  <p><i>The see-food diet also works for healthy foods. Just thinking about a food will prompt us to eat more of it in the future.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand out two different question sheets evenly to the class, splitting it in half.</li> <li>• One sheet will ask the students to recall in detail the last time they ate soup; the other question sheet will ask details about the last meal they had.</li> <li>• After students have finished answering the question sheets, they will be asked to go to blackboard and write down how many cans of soup they will probably eat in the next two weeks.</li> <li>• Compare the results between those asked about soup and those asked about their last meal.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Activity 3: See-Food Strategies</b></p>  <p><i>Allow students to apply what they have learned.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In small groups have the students come up with a strategy to beat the see-food diet and make it work for healthy foods rather than junk food.</li> <li>• Have each group present their strategies to the rest of the class.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discussion:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do we do about avoiding visual prompts that we can't control like fast-food signs or convenience stores?</li> <li>• Can just thinking about food and visualizing it stimulate our feelings of hunger?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Review:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do we eat visible food more often than foods that are covered or stored away?</li> <li>• Who would eat more: someone who has been thinking about a food all day, or someone who just gets the impulse to have it?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Extension Activities:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the students how they will make the see-food diet work for them in the future?</li> </ul>

## Title: *Convenient Cues*

**Background Information:** People are likely to over-eat convenient foods more often. It is human nature for us to choose convenience over health when deciding what to eat. The thing about convenience is that the more effort it takes to acquire the food, the more time it gives us to talk ourselves out of eating it; or we can count out the whole idea of eating the food because it would take too much effort. The amount of effort that it takes us to obtain food is what causes us to gravitate toward more convenient foods. There are several steps that can be taken to make food less convenient and as a result reduce instances of overeating.

### Objectives:

- Determine the effect that the convenience of a food has on our eating behaviors
- Identify steps that can be taken to make food less convenient.
- Develop strategies to avoid falling into the trap of eating convenient, but unhealthy foods.
- Determine if the almond experiment supports research about the convenience of foods related to eating behaviors.

### Materials:

- Paper cups and plastic forks/spoons
- Shelled and non-shelled almonds
- Chopsticks
- An appropriate and practical food for the eating contest

Outline	Activities
<p><b>Lesson Starter:</b></p> <p><i>Almond Joy!</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give half of the students a paper cup with shelled almonds and give the other half of the class unshelled almonds.</li> <li>• Tell students they can snack on the almonds throughout class.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Content:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give the class some background information.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the importance and relevance of the objectives</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity 1: Eating Contest</b></p>  <p><i>Shows students how eating utensils influence amount consumed</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students pair up, and prepare to compete against each other in an eating contest. (Teacher can choose an appropriate food)</li> <li>• One student in the pair will have a fork as an eating utensil and the other student will have chopsticks.</li> <li>• Record the winner of the contest and then allow the students to switch utensils and have another match.</li> <li>• Explain to students that people eat less when eating is inconvenient, so eating with chopsticks can be a useful tool in weight loss</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity 2: Convenience is Overrated...</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In their pairs, or teams of pairs have students come up with three strategies to make food less convenient and as a result less tempting to overeat.</li> <li>• Have each team present their strategies to the rest of the class.</li> <li>• Lead a discussion and guide students to identify ways to eliminate cues that lead people to overeat.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity 3: Almond Joy Results!</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the blackboard or marker board, have the students record their names and how many almonds that they have left.</li> <li>• Compare how many almonds were left over between the shelled and unshelled almonds.</li> <li>• Discuss if the results support or negate the theories of convenience related to overeating.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Written Activity:</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the students write three things in their kitchen at home that they can change to make food less convenient.</li> <li>• Ask a few students to read their answers aloud and discuss why those strategies will help to reduce overeating</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discussion:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss several strategies that will make food less convenient. (move tempting foods to remote areas, wrap foods in aluminum foil, repack food in smaller packages, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Review:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The more effort it takes to get a food, the more time it gives us to talk ourselves out of eating it.</li> <li>• Human nature urges us to devour the most convenient food that we can find, but if we can recognize the urge we can fight it.</li> <li>• How can we avoid the influence of visual prompts like advertisements or fast-food signs?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Extension Activities:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge students to implement strategies at home to make food less convenient and less likely to cause overeating.</li> <li>• Urge students to beware of convenient fast-food joints as well</li> </ul>

**Title: *The Club Store Curse***

**Background Information:**

Another major factor in making foods more convenient is wholesale club stores. Do you enjoy hunting for bargains in the wholesale club stores? It seems like a great deal to buy jumbo size packages of candy and snack food, but these deals usually backfire; people end up throwing away the leftover food that they got tired of it and couldn't stand to eat anymore. The worst result of the club store curse is when the consumer regrets the weight they gained from eating too much of a product. But have no fear there are steps that you can use to take advantage of the wholesale deals while avoiding negative results.

**Objectives:**

- Explain the negative effects that buying wholesale food products can have on the consumer.
- Describe steps that can be taken to purchase wholesale products without wasting the food at the end and with out gaining unwanted weight.

**Materials:**

- Examples of several sizes of club store packages
- Fake money
- Magnets, glues, art/construction paper

Outline	Activities
<p><b>Lesson Starter:</b></p> <p><i>Does it really pay off?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students if they shop in a wholesale club store on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Present examples of different sizes of packaging from small to jumbo size.</li> <li>• Give the packages realistic prices and ask the students to raise their hand for the package size that they would buy.</li> <li>• Ask why they would choose that package size.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Content:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give the class some background information.</li> <li>• Explain the importance and relevance of the objectives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity 1: Let's Start Our Own Club!</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give the students some sort of object or paper to count as money to buy some food from you.</li> <li>• Package the food into several sizes and price them in the same manner as club stores.</li> <li>• Show the class each package size of food and allow students that wish to buy that size to buy it with their funny money.</li> <li>• Once all students have bought their food (peanuts or chips, or etc.) tell them that they bought a special type of food that will go bad in 3 minutes.</li> <li>• At the end of 3 minutes take a count of how many pieces of food each student has. Discuss how much money they would have wasted as a class for buying the bulk sizes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity 2: Making Membership Pay-off</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In groups of four, students should develop at least two strategies that can help us to avoid wasting money and throwing away food.</li> <li>• Develop two strategies that will limit unnecessary weight gain due to jumbo packaged food.</li> <li>• When finished, students will present their ideas to the rest of the class.</li> <li>• Lead a guided discussion identifying the most effective strategies</li> </ul>

<p><b>Activity 3: Shopping Etiquette</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the key shopping strategies that will reduce the temptation of overeating.</li> <li>• Give the students adequate materials to make their own refrigerator magnet.</li> <li>• Have the students make a list of key shopping strategies that will limit the availability of unhealthy foods in the household</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discussion:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss why wholesale club stores may not be as good of a deal as they seem.</li> <li>• Is it better to shop at a retail grocery store or a wholesale club? What are the tradeoffs?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Review:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The wholesale deals can backfire if we end up throwing away leftover food, or if we gain unwanted weight due to the availability of the food.</li> <li>• What steps can we take to avoid the club store curse?</li> <li>• What shopping strategies can we use to reduce the amount of available snack food in the house?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Extension Activities:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage students to practice some of these strategies when they go home.</li> <li>• The next time they shop at a wholesale club, encourage them to repackage jumbo size containers and store extra food in a remote area</li> </ul>



## FAQ's:

### **1. How can I make the see-food diet work for me?**

Make healthy foods easy to see and unhealthy food hard to see. Fruit bowls can replace cookie jars. Healthy foods can migrate to the front, eye level shelves of the fridge.

### **2. How can I avoid over-eating the “bad food”?**

Wrap tempting foods into aluminum foil and mark them. Just like covering up the candy jar, it makes the food less tempting than an open container. Move visible food or move around it.

### **3. Why does seeing a food make me feel hungry?**

The visibility of these tempting foods actually makes you hungrier because even the sight of them stimulates the release of a brain chemical called dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure and reward.

### **4. How can I make good food more convenient?**

Set good food out on the table or kitchen counter, and make healthy food and drinks available at the dinner table. In one mess hall study, soldiers drank almost twice as much water when water pitchers were put on each dining table than when they were put over on a side table. Even with milk, people drank 42% more milk when the milk machine was 12 feet away than when it was 25 feet away.



## Extended Background Information:

For people who mindlessly eat, there are several “booby-traps” that they encounter on a daily basis that contribute to overeating and unwanted weight gain. One of the most common traps is the “see-food” diet, that far too many people fall victim to without even realizing it. Simply seeing or smelling a food can lead eaters to want to devour it. Think you have the willpower to avoid that little dish of chocolates you have sitting on your office desk or in your living room? Think again.

Researchers gave an office building full of secretaries covered dishes of 30 Hershey’s kisses as a gift for Secretaries Week, and their dish was not to be shared with others. The glass dishes were identical except for one detail: half were clear and half were white so that they totally hid the chocolates if the lid was on. Secretaries who had been given candies in clear dishes had gotten caught with their hand in the candy jar almost twice as often (9 times versus 5 times) as those given white dishes. Over the two week experiment, they ate 950 more calories than the secretaries with the white dishes; over a year, that candy dish would have added over 3 pounds of extra fat, and the kicker is that none of the secretaries would have known.

It is not just candy on the desk; the same principle of visibility can follow people through the day wherever they encounter food. Why does this happen? We tend to eat more of these visible “see-foods” because we think about them more. Every time we see the candy jar we need to decide whether we want a Hersheys kiss or whether we do not; and every time we see it, we need to say “No” to something that is tasty, and tempting. Simply seeing or smelling a food we like can stimulate salivation and make people hungrier. While drooling has never hurt anyone, the more actively you salivate the more likely you are to overeat. When you salivate, your stomach also ends up contracting. The combination of the two makes your brain believe you are hungrier than probably are.

The convenience of a food can also lead us to seek foods that are most convenient. One cafeteria tested this by leaving the lid of an ice cream cooler closed on some days and open on other days. The ice cream cooler was in the exact same location, and people could always see the ice cream. All that varied was whether they had to go through the effort of opening the lid in order to get it. Even that was too much work for many people. If the lid was closed, only 14% of the diners decided it was worth the modest effort to open it. If the lid was open, 30% decided it was ice cream time.

One other booby-trap to beware of is the wholesale club store curse. The first curse is to overspend, even on things we do not need and the second curse takes effect later, after we buy bulk food and return home. Most bulk foods come in large single open containers such as 5 pound barrels of pretzel or in large multi-pack containers such as 48 packets of instant oatmeal in one package. You will eat much more from these huge containers for the first six or seven days, but after that you will start slowing down because you become tired of the food. What happens next, is the left over food become “Cabinet Castaways,” slowly migrating to the back of the cupboard, and eventually to the basement or storeroom, or far corner of the refrigerator; out of sight, out of mind.

Fortunately there are several steps that you can take to avoid falling victim to these mindless eating booby-traps.



## Quick Tips

- Leave serving dishes on the stove or in the kitchen – anywhere but on the table where they will be wolfed down until empty.
- Move extra tempting foods, down into a remote almost “off-limits” storage area such as the basement, in hard-to-reach cupboard.
- Put the most tempting leftovers in the back of the refrigerator or freezer.
- Wrap them in aluminum foil, so they are harder to open and see what is inside and so they do not tempt you.
- Use harder-to-open ways of resealing foods. Using tape to close a bag of chips is more of a deterrent to an impulse splurge than an easy-to-open chip clip.
- Move your chair. Before you start eating or after you are initially finished, push your chair back 4 inches or so to put the remaining food out of reach.
- Snack only at the kitchen or dining room table.
- Shop the outside aisles so you are not tempted by the new improved breakfast cereals, potato chips, and ice creams.
- When you shop, keep to the perimeter of the store. Most supermarkets situate fresh, healthy foods such as produce, meat, and dairy along the walls. Avoid the center aisles, which tend to be filled with the sweets and heavily processed foods.
- Shop with a list, and do not linger in the store. The longer you shop, the more you will buy.
- Only buy food on a full stomach and avoid buying snack foods for future use.
- Repackage jumbo sizes into smaller bags and Tupperware containers, and bottles.
- Hide the extras for jumbo packages and save them for a later use.



## *Worksheet 1*

### **Soup Talk:**

Write down a detailed description of the last time you ate soup. What had happened earlier that day? What type of soup did you make? What did you eat with it? How did it taste? How did it make you feel when you were eating it? What did you think of that meal as after you were finished?

The last time I ate soup....

## *Worksheet 2*

### **Lunch Time:**

Write down a detailed description of what you ate for lunch yesterday.