



## ***How big business got Brazil hooked on junk food***

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### *Literature Review*

The desire to kick the habit of eating junk food is shared by millions of people. Unfortunately, they didn't realize how many billions of dollars food manufacturers have invested into figuring out exactly what the brain loves!

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## **INTRODUCTIONS and DESENVOLVIMENT**

The desire to kick the habit of eating junk food is shared by millions of people. Unfortunately, they don't realize how many billions of dollars food manufacturers have invested into figuring out exactly what the brain loves!

And they know that every time the brain experiences something it loves, it releases small amounts of dopamine, a brain messenger that is activated when we drink coffee, have sex or use illegal drugs. So there are some very powerful reasons why the junk food habit is so hard to kick.

However, when we know what the brain likes about junk food, we can help it prefer healthier foods and get rid of the bad foods! These are the reasons why it is so difficult to kick the habit of eating junk food:

### **1 THE BRAIN LIKES FOOD WITH 'POWERFUL CONTRAST**

When a food has a crunchy texture with a creamy, smooth interior, the brain goes 'woohoo!' This is an exciting experience for the brain because it involves a variety of contrasting textures that are felt along with the taste buds.

The brain enjoys the extremes of these textures and wants to experience them again and again, which is why chips and gravy, cream-filled cookies, and salted caramels are so popular.

Picture 1: Nuguets



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**2. STIMULATING THE SALIVARY AND GUSTATORY GLANDS**





When food stimulates your salivary glands to produce a lot of saliva, the food moves more inside your mouth, covering more taste buds and increasing the chances of tasting the food even more.

Food additives like monosodium glutamate (MSG) or hydrolyzed vegetable protein (HVP) – which is basically MSG in disguise – make your taste buds more sensitive to the taste of food, so it seems tastier. Creamy foods help spread food around your mouth, amplifying your overall taste experience.

### **3. REFINED FOODS “Disappear” IN YOUR MOUTH**



Very refined foods dissolve in the mouth very quickly and don't give the brain a



chance to register that you've eaten.

So you keep eating and consuming many more calories than if the food took time to chew and your brain had the chance to pay attention to say “enough, that’s enough!”. It takes about 20 minutes for the hypothalamus to register satiety and during that time you can eat a lot of refined food.

#### **4. THE BRAIN LOVES FOOD VARIETY**



Junk food has crunchiness, juiciness and creamy textures, as well as flavors that include salty, sweet and 'umami' (a special flavor described as salty), which provides a wide variety of stimulating and pleasurable sensations in the mouth of those who consume it.

Additionally, food manufacturers are constantly creating new flavor combinations and adding different textures to entice people to try and find new



favorites for the brain to enjoy through the taste buds.

## **5. THE EMOTIONAL MEMORY BANK**

Past food experiences that were enjoyable unfortunately drive future food choices. Your brain is an expert at remembering past experiences that provoked the “dopaminergic” effect because it remembers the pleasure experienced and encourages you to repeat it.

Anticipating what you will eat again increases salivation, which sets the perfect stage for saliva to move food quickly through your mouth. The feelings of satisfaction and pleasure experienced when eating these stimulating foods produce extremely powerful memories that entice you to want a “fix” of dopamine again.

### **WHAT TO DO THEN?**

The contrast and stimulation of good sensations in the mouth can be replicated by eating crunchy vegetables or fruits with creamy “dips” such as hummus or butter. Adding spices and herbs to your food will also increase flavor and enjoyment.

Try making foods you can enjoy guilt-free, like baked sweet potatoes dipped in a creamy, tangy sauce. Additionally, adding fats and oils to food after cooking increases the spread of food in your mouth, allowing you to appreciate the full flavor and texture of the food you are eating.



It is important to keep in mind that flavor molecules are well dispersed in fats and oils, but are low in water, which is why low-fat diets are not very appetizing, as well as being bad in general.

A simple trick is to always eat before you go shopping so that your brain isn't tempted to splurge on junk food while you're shopping and buying foods you would otherwise avoid. Additionally, avoid processed foods with long lists of ingredients that contain additives, which lead to food addiction.

Understanding how the brain works is the way to protect yourself from the temptations of the modern world.

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