

Script – Broadcast – As you age, just say no to the junk food

INTRO

Greasy pizza, cookies, sugary drinks – you name it – junk food has a grip on many Americans including people between 50 and 80 years old.

About 13% of adults in that age group are addicted to highly processed foods (1 in every 8), according to a [study](#) by the University of Michigan’s National Poll on Healthy Aging.

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More than 2,100 adults between 50-80 were polled so researchers could learn more about the unhealthy relationship with processed foods including sweets, snacks, and fast food. The most common symptoms were intense cravings, the inability to cut down on intake and signs of withdrawal that caused headaches and trouble concentrating.

The study found that women had a greater addiction to these foods than men, especially those in their 50s and early 60s. Older adults who were overweight or suffering from mental health issues or isolation also had a greater risk of addiction to processed foods.

(((SOT)))

Jason Crum, dietitian, OSF HealthCare

“These processed foods not only have sodium, but they also have sugar of various types. And those paired together instigate a hormonal response that most of us don't know how to really read and respond to. So we fill ourselves with the calories instead of the actual food or the nutrients that would make our hormones work better, so it makes the addiction stronger.” (:25)

“For most people we emotionally eat, it’s something to distract us. And we tend to go for the things that will give us that reward center in our brain, sugar rewards that center, and we look for that as a temporary fix to things.” (:13)

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Instead, Crum suggests people eat more “real” foods and stay away from processed ones. Real food is unprocessed, free of chemicals and full of nutrients such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, beans, dairy, eggs and meat, fish and poultry. Real foods are low in sugar, heart healthy, high in healthy fats, and good for your gut, among other reasons.