TOP 10 TIPS TO CURB YOUR CRAVINGS

1. **Avoid your triggers:** The reality is that you crave what you eat, so as you make healthier choices, your old cravings will weaken. Certain situations can sabotage your weight loss efforts. For example, going to the movies can ignite your brain’s emotional memory centers and make you feel like you need an extra-large tub of popcorn. Identify the people, places and things that trigger your cravings and plan ahead to avoid making an unhealthy choice. For example, take a healthy snack to the movies so you are not tempted to buy popcorn. This will save you money too!

2. **Balance your blood sugar:** Research studies indicate that low blood sugar levels are associated with lower overall blood flow to the brain, which can jeopardize your ability to make good decisions. To keep your blood sugar stable, eat a nutritious breakfast with protein such as eggs, protein shake or nut butters. Plan to eat smaller more frequent meals throughout the day. Feel free to plan a protein-packed snack between meals. Also, avoid eating 2 to 3 hours before bedtime.

3. **Eliminate sugar, artificial sweeteners and refined carbs:** It’s best to go cold turkey. Eliminate refined sugars, sodas, fruit juices, and artificial sweeteners from your diet as these can trigger cravings. Many doctors believe that sugar is the primary cause of obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes. The latest statistics reveal that the average American consumes 130 pounds of sugar a year!

4. **Eat SLOW carb, not LOW carb:** Eat carbohydrates that do not spike your blood sugar. Choose high fiber carbs that keep you fuller longer and help reduce your sugar cravings. You can increase your fiber intake by eating vegetables, fruits, beans, and whole grains. Fiber will assist weight loss since it fills up your stomach and helps you moderate your portions. Carbohydrates are essential to good health and are not the enemy. Bad carbohydrates such as simple sugars and refined products are the ones to avoid.

5. **Drink more Water:** Sometimes hunger is disguised as dehydration. When you are dehydrated your body will increase your hunger level in an attempt to get more water to rehydrate. Try drinking a glass of water before your meals to make you feel fuller to help you moderate your food intake.

6. **Make protein 30% of your diet:** Protein fills you up and keeps you satisfied longer. It also regulates your blood sugar and it makes your body release appetite suppressing hormones.

7. **Manage your stress:** Stress triggers hormones that activate cravings. Chronic stress has been
associated with obesity, addiction, anxiety, depression, Alzheimer’s disease, heart disease, and cancer. Adopt a daily stress management program that includes deep breathing exercises, prayer and other relaxation techniques. Visit our Faith section for spiritually-based ideas on how to reduce stress.

8. **Follow the 90/10 Rule:** Give yourself a break. Make great food choices 90% of the time, and allow yourself margin to enjoy some of your favorite foods on occasion. This way you won’t feel deprived and you will avoid bringing on something you’ll regret later.

9. **Get moving:** Research shows that physical activity can curb cravings. Plan out your exercise for the week and schedule it on your calendar. Make the commitment to yourself just like any other important meeting or appointment.

10. **Get 7 to 8 hours of sleep:** Sleep deprivation can increase cravings.