

Sneaky Diet Saboteurs

Blood sugar imbalance: Although they are the foods we love the most—cookies, cakes, white pasta, bread and alcohol—they will pack on the pounds like nothing else. These foods are called simple, refined carbohydrates and they cause rapid fluctuations in blood sugar levels. When we eat simple carbohydrates (also called high glycemic index foods), such as products made from white sugar and white flour, the carbohydrates enter the bloodstream quickly causing blood sugar levels to spike. A large amount of the hormone insulin is then secreted to rapidly lower blood sugar levels. Excess insulin gets stored as fat. Alternatively, complex carbohydrates (called low glycemic index foods), such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains, are broken down slowly by the body causing fewer rises in blood sugar levels, less insulin secretion and ultimately, less fat storage. Aim to get about 30% of calories from complex carbohydrates, such as whole grains and fiber-rich fruits and vegetables, to keep your insulin levels low and avoid weight gain. See the Truestar Weight Loss Program for more information.

Fat-free is not a license to overeat! For the past 30 years, we have been told to cut the fat to lose weight. People filled their shopping carts with lowfat or fat-free foods and ate to their stomachs' content. But as many gained weight instead of losing it, people began to wonder what went wrong. Firstly, lowfat products are made by replacing the fat with sugar, making them low in fat, but high in calories. Secondly, many lowfat foods are filled with refined carbohydrates, which cause the body to oversecrete insulin and promote the storage of fat. Your best bet is to choose foods that are naturally low in fat and calories, such as fruits and vegetables, and to include a balance of complex carbohydrates, lean proteins and healthy fats at each meal. See Eat Fat to Lose Fat for more information.

Hypothyroidism: Thyroid hormone deficiency can decrease metabolism, causing weight gain as well as other problems, such as fatigue, constipation, dry skin and inability to focus. Weight gain occurs from fat accumulation and fluid retention caused by protein deposits in the body. If you suspect your thyroid is low, speak to your healthcare practitioner about getting your thyroid.

Emotional eating: Eating to feed your emotions or when you're stressed or bored is very common. Research actually shows that 75% of overeating is caused by emotional eating. People are often not aware that they are using food as a coping mechanism in times of stress, boredom or anxiety. The temporary good feeling these foods provide is often followed by weight gain and subsequent feelings of guilt, shame and stress. To control emotional eating, try to uncover the emotion that drives the behavior and then find new habits to replace the old, harmful behaviors. For example, if you always overeat when you are sitting on the couch and bored, try getting up and going for a walk instead. Use the Truestar SPTS Daily Life Improvement Checklist to help you implement healthy new habits, one day at a time.

Call in the Portion Control Police: In this “supersized” nation, people are eating not only the wrong foods, but in the wrong amounts. Large portions of food have become the norm and have contributed to an oversized population, as excess calories lead to excess fat. Try to eat five or six small meals throughout the day rather than three large meals. Also, learn proper portion control by measuring your food to see what an appropriate portion looks like so you don't overfill your plate or overstuff your belly.

Not eating a balanced breakfast: Typical breakfast foods include refined carbohydrates (sugars) such as muffins, sugary cereals, pancakes, waffles and doughnuts. These foods set you up for increased hunger within a few hours and cause your body to oversecrete insulin, resulting in weight gain. Enjoy a balanced breakfast with complex carbohydrates, a lean protein source and some healthy fat to keep blood sugar and insulin levels in check which will ultimately make you feel full

longer. Great balanced breakfasts include: Omega-3 eggs with turkey bacon and whole grain toast or a protein fruit smoothie.

Hidden sources of fat: Hidden fat refers to the fat that is found naturally in certain foods that we may not be aware of, such as meat and milk products, packaged or processed foods and salad dressings. To avoid excess calories from hidden fats, read nutrition labels carefully; you can tell if the food you are eating is high in fat by reading the ingredients label. The calorie value of the food, which is listed on the nutrition label, will also give you an idea of the amount of fat in the food, as high calorie usually means high fat.

Not getting your ZZZs: Did you know that not getting enough sleep can affect your weight? Studies show that sleep reduces the stress hormone cortisol, which is important for fat loss. Try to get between seven and nine hours of sleep per night. [Click here for more information.](#)

Lack of exercise: Exercise promotes weight loss by boosting your metabolism and burning calories. Cardiovascular exercise, such as walking, running, biking, swimming and aerobics, allows your body to burn a lot of calories at one time. Weight training will increase muscle mass, which burns more calories than body fat. Weight training also puts the metabolism into overdrive, so you burn calories for up to two hours after the workout. Get off the couch and get moving with the Truestar Exercise Plan.

Reference website: <http://www.myfit.ca/mealplans/viewall.asp>