



Curb your Cravings through Whole Body Healing

by Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S.

The experience of craving stems from a state of deficiency creating a feeling that something is missing. Many individuals turn to over-consumption of sweets or crunchy-salty foods as a way of covering up such feelings. Dealing with cravings in this manner is often precipitated by excessive stress and for many results in repetitive episodes of binge eating where food is used as a form of self-medication.

Such behavior compounds the intensity and frequency of cravings to the point where there is a constant desire to eat unhealthy snacks throughout the day. This has a direct impact on consumption of sweet and salty foods and ultimately leads to increase in body weight. In addition, an individual experiences internal anger, disgust and shame about using food in this manner – often accompanied by angst and discontent with their physical body. Plus, the accumulation of unwanted pounds results in resorting to food restriction and

other weight loss methods with sole focus on the weight.

A more productive approach would be to take the focus off of ‘weight’ and replace it with a plan to establish balance and wholeness of body, mind and spirit. A primary goal would include getting to the bottom of what is “eating at you” by facing issues head-on so they can be resolved. Working with a mental health professional could prove quite helpful during this process. Addressing any underlying energetic and/or physical deficiency along with discovering the root cause of cravings is equally important. This is where acupuncture comes in as a gentle method that prods innate healing ability and brings the body back into balance along with establishing free flowing energy.

As an ancient holistic technique, acupuncture spurs internal healing through integration of the body’s energetic, spiritual and physical components. It strengthens will power and provides the wherewithal to

restore healthy eating habits. This contributes to overall health through minimizing chance for obesity and chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular and metabolic disease, which are commonly associated with over-indulgence of sweet and salty foods.

Acupuncture works by strengthening the spleen and kidney energetic systems, which according to the “Law of the Five Elements” are at the root of excessive desire to consume sweet and salty foods. Sweet foods are associated with the earth element and nourish the spleen, and salty foods are associated with the water element and nourish the kidneys. However, when eaten in excess or in a de-natured form they impede the spleen’s function to transform and transport food and obstruct the kidney’s ability to strengthen will power, promote water metabolism and boost energy. Deficiency of the spleen manifests as fatigue and weakness of the limbs combined with excessive bloating, gas, distension and irregularity of the bowels, in addition

to muscular soreness or weakness. And deficiency of kidney energy shows up as fatigue, low motivation, lack of sexual energy, problems concentrating as well as sore and weak lower back and knees. It’s no wonder that a person with such symptoms turns to sugary or salty foods to boost their energy in order to get them out of their doldrums. And why strengthening of spleen and kidney energy provides the energy, focus and will to choose other more healthy means to the same end.

Chinese medicine teaches that health is maintained through balanced and regular eating habits that include each of the five basic flavors: bitter, sour, pungent, salty and sweet. Some foods categorized as “full sweet” contain nutritional value and are said to nourish the spleen energy. These include fruits, seeds, grains, nuts and vegetables such as carrots or butternut squash or potatoes such as yams or sweet potatoes. Whereas sweet foods such as cake, cookies, candy, doughnuts and ice cream are categorized as “empty sweet” without redeeming nutritional value. These empty sweet foods also raise blood sugar too quickly followed by an eventual drop in energy and craving

for more sugar for another energy boost.

Extreme craving also stems from poor food quality, insufficient nutritional levels, irregular eating patterns, excessive stress and emotional upset as well as improper sleep. Peak nutrition is obtained through eating more organic foods, drinking adequate water along with eating meals regularly at the same time each day. Acupuncture is helpful in both regards as alleviates stress, promotes emotional balance and leads to more restful sleep through balancing energy flow, calming the heart and pacifying the spirit.



The most beneficial approach to establish balance is to do things in moderation, including sensible eating habits combined with energizing lifestyle habits that promote overall health and healing. Become cognizant and sensitive to what is bothersome and avoid situations that create a sense of internal emptiness and lack of ease. Attempt to resolve what is eating away at oneself, rather than eating cares away. Continue to work toward this goal and allow each day to bring inner smiles about the benefits gained through a measured approach with full consideration for personal energetic, spiritual, emotional and physical needs.

Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S. is the author of Qigong for Staying Young: A Simple 20-Minute Workout to Cultivate Your Vital Energy, co-author of Feeling Light: The Holistic Solution to Permanent Weight Loss and Wellness and the director of the Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center in Shrewsbury, NJ. For more information be sure to visit www.healing4u.com and www.qigong4.us.

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