

October 2025



Enjoy Halloween, understand cravings, and feel in control this October
What cravings are, why they happen, and simple ways to manage them—candy season included.

From Your Dietitian

October can feel like a month-long parade of treats — class parties, office candy bowls, and aisles of fun-size everything. If certain foods feel irresistible, you're not alone.

Cravings are common and **not your fault**. They don't reflect your willpower or your worth. They're part of normal human physiology, influenced by brain reward pathways, hormones, sleep, stress, habits, and the cues around us.

- A quick success story: A patient — let's call her "M." — kept mini chocolates on her desk for "coworkers." By 2:30 p.m., one piece became many. We tried two shifts: moving the candy out of sight (reducing the cue) and pairing two minis with lunch (protein + fiber first). Within a week, the 2:30 spiral disappeared. Same candy, different plan.

Cravings 101: Hunger vs. Appetite vs. Cravings

We've all felt hunger and appetite—and that intense must-have-it pull of a craving.

- **Hunger** is the physical need for fuel—any nourishing food can help.
- **Appetite** is the desire to eat.
- **Cravings** are different: an **intense urge to eat a specific food, ideally right away**. You can crave chocolate (the most common craving), chips, cookies, or ice cream—even if you just finished dinner. Unlike hunger, **only the specific food feels satisfying**.

Fun fact: Research suggests that simple nutrient or energy deficiencies aren't strong, common drivers of cravings. In other words, you're not "failing" because you're low on one vitamin—cravings are more complex than that.

Why We Crave (Especially in October)

Four big, everyday drivers—plus a few “bonus” triggers—often converge this time of year:

1). Food euphoria/reward

Highly palatable foods activate feel-good pathways in the brain. Dopamine and other signals reinforce the “reward,” training us to seek that food again—hello, Halloween candy.

2.)Stress

Chronic stress raises cortisol, nudging us toward quick-energy, highly palatable foods. Eating can temporarily soothe or distract from stress, which can reinforce the craving loop.

3.)Lack of sleep

Sleep debt disrupts appetite hormones—increasing ghrelin (hunger) and decreasing leptin (fullness)—and raises stress load, all of which intensify cravings.

4.)Day-to-day habits & cues

If you usually snack while driving, scrolling, or watching TV, those contexts become autopilot triggers. The sight or smell of a food, a break-room candy bowl, or non-stop holiday ads can also spark cravings before you can think.

Other contributors: Hormonal fluctuations across the menstrual cycle, certain medications, and emerging research on genes and the gut microbiota.

Halloween Candy Plan (For Adults and Kids)

A few decisions made **before** the candy shows up can dial down the “all or nothing” swing.

Decide ahead.

Choose a portion that feels right (for many adults, 2-3 fun-size pieces) and decide when you’ll enjoy it. Pre-portion favorites in a small container.

Pair with protein or a meal.

Have candy with dinner or alongside yogurt, nuts, cheese, or a turkey roll-up. Protein and fiber help blunt rapid blood sugar swings that can amplify cravings.

Make it mindful. Plate it, sit, and slow your first few bites. Notice smell, texture, flavor. Satisfaction rises; urgency falls.

Keep it visible only when you’re choosing it. Store the rest in an opaque bin. Visibility drives impulses.

Favorites-only rule. Keep what you truly love; share/donate the rest. Satisfaction matters.

For kids:

- Serve a balanced dinner before trick-or-treating.
- Let them pick a few favorites that night; sort and save the rest.
- Consider a simple “trade” system for non-food prizes (stickers, craft kits, extra story time).
- Decide together on a daily rhythm (e.g., one treat after dinner) and keep candy in a family spot to reduce constant cues.



Six Smart Strategies to Curb Cravings (When You Want To)

- 1.) **Try water first.** Thirst can masquerade as hunger. Keep a water bottle handy.
- 2.) **Practice a short pause with mindfulness.** Ask: Am I stressed, bored, tired, or actually hungry? Try 3–5 slow breaths, a two-minute walk, or a short meditation before deciding.
- 3.) **Balance meals and eat regularly.** Protein + fiber helps you feel fuller sooner and longer. Long gaps between meals make “I’ll eat anything” moments more likely.
- 4.) **Make nutritious options convenient.** Wash and chop produce in advance. Keep protein-rich snacks ready (Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, cheese sticks, hummus, nuts).
- 5.) **Limit environmental cues.** Relocate the office candy bowl, store treats out of sight, and curate social feeds that constantly feature craveable foods.
- 6.) **Use non-food rewards.** Celebrate or decompress with a bath, a chapter of a book, music, a craft, or a short nap.

If a craving persists, **enjoy the food without guilt** — on a plate, with attention — then move on. Permission reduces the tug-of-war.

Mini Recipe: Chocolate–Peanut Butter Yogurt Dip (5 minutes)

Ingredients

- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon natural peanut butter (or sunflower seed butter)
- 1–2 teaspoons cocoa powder
- 1–2 teaspoons maple syrup or honey, to taste
- Pinch of salt and a drop of vanilla

Directions

Whisk until smooth. Serve with apple slices or strawberries. Protein + fiber = staying power and a sweet finish that doesn’t snowball.



New Dinner Ideas for Busy October Nights

To balance out the candy season, here are four wholesome, family-friendly dinners you can prep quickly:

- **One-Pot Chicken & Rice Soup:** Simmer chicken, brown rice, carrots, celery, and spinach in broth. Hearty, comforting, and makes great leftovers.
- **Salmon Sheet Pan with Sweet Potatoes & Green Beans:** Toss everything with olive oil and seasonings, then roast together for an easy balanced plate.
- **Veggie-Packed Pasta Primavera:** Whole-grain pasta tossed with zucchini, broccoli, and cherry tomatoes in a light garlic-olive oil sauce; sprinkle with parmesan.
- **UnStuffed Bell Peppers:**

♥ Unstuffed Bell Peppers

Prep Time	5 mins
Total Time	25 mins
Meal Type	Lunch,Dinner,Snack
Contributed By	
Source	Living Plate
Servings	4 - 



Ingredients

lb,c g/ml

- 1 Tbs Olive Oil
- 1 cup Onion, frozen, *Chopped*
- 2 cups Bell Pepper, frozen, *Chopped*
- 1 lb Turkey, 93% lean, *ground*
- 2 tsp Garlic, frozen, *minced* (2 Cubes)
- 1 tsp Chili Powder
- 1 1/2 tsp Cumin, *ground*
- 1/4 tsp Cayenne Pepper, *ground*
- 3 cups Cauliflower, frozen, *Riced*
- 1 1/4 oz Can Tomatoes, diced, low sodium, *drained*
- Salt and Pepper
- 1/4 cup Cilantro, fresh, *Chopped*

Directions

Make

1. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the frozen onion and bell peppers and cook until translucent, about 3 minutes. Add the ground turkey to the pan, using a spoon to break up any large pieces.
2. When the turkey begins to turn brown, add the frozen garlic, chili powder, cumin, and cayenne pepper. Continue to cook until the turkey is completely browned the garlic is fragrant.
3. Add the frozen cauliflower rice to the skillet and stir to incorporate. Cook for 2 minutes. Add the diced tomatoes and cook for an additional 4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Garnish with chopped cilantro and serve.

Ask the Dietitian

Q: How can I handle Halloween candy at home without triggering more cravings?

A: Pair candy with a meal or protein, pre-decide your portion, and savor it mindfully. Keep extras out of sight and follow a “favorites only” guideline. For kids, serve a balanced dinner before trick-or-treating, let them help sort favorites, and consider simple non-food trades to keep candy from becoming a power struggle.

Class Spotlight (Online, Live)

Nutrition for Heart Health, October 13th 6pm

Take charge of your heart health with this informative and practical session designed to help you make lasting, positive changes to your diet and lifestyle. Whether you're looking to lower cholesterol, reduce sodium intake, or create balanced meals, this class has you covered.

To register visit:

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/1b878449-e863-4ee5-bc82-780d48dd978d@7c9525a2-21e6-4801-ba9d-f3c507c8ffd0>

Thank you for reading our Healthy Living newsletter!

Cravings are part of being human. In a month full of candy, your power comes from awareness + a plan that respects satisfaction and supports your health. Choose what you love, enjoy it with intention, and keep a few steady meals and snacks in your corner.

Thank you for reading our Healthy Living Newsletter! If you have a question you would like for us to answer in upcoming newsletters or topics you would like to see covered please email us at jessicajantz@clayplattefamily.com



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