



# THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DRUGS AND FOOD

**Goal of the Handout:** To compare the drug-like properties of processed foods to addictive substances

**Application:** Understanding the difference between food and addictive substances could help food addicts understand why processed foods should be avoided.

Food addiction may have developed as the result of 'food products' being formulated to have addictive properties. It would be natural then to be confused about the difference between food and addictive foods and addictive substances since products being sold as food can have an impact similar to that of addictive substances. Thinking about the difference between food and addictive substances can help clarify the situation and give food addicts a better framework for food choices.

The function of food is to...	Do processed foods generally perform this function?
Nourish	No
Provide amino acids, essential fats, or fiber	No
Provide vitamins or minerals	No
Sustain growth	No

The actions of recreational drugs...	Do processed foods do this?
Provide a high	Yes
Provide a crash	Yes
Addict through cravings	Yes
Create a withdrawal syndrome	Yes
Require abstinence as an effective treatment	Yes
Have 12-step societies for lifetime recovery	Yes
Promote compulsive use to the detriment of the user	Yes
Require progressively greater quantities to get 'high'	Possibly
Are mood altering	Yes

When we encounter training about drug avoidance, we can tie the lessons to processed foods and be reinforced in our motivation for avoiding those foods.