AVAILABILITY OF PROCESSED FOOD IS A PROBLEM

Goal of the Hand-Out: This hand-out describes why it is so dangerous for food addicts to have processed foods in the house.

Application: Food addicts in recovery can use this Handout to gently educate household members about the dangers of keeping processed foods in the house.

Background: For hundreds of thousands of years, humans ate whatever was available. When a food came into season, humans would eat it all because they would not see it again for a year. As a result, humans are conditioned to eat all of whatever's available.

• Also, humans chose to eat the most calorie-dense food they could find. If they had a choice between salmon or grass, their brains urgently directed them to the salmon. This was also a crucial survival behavior.

• This was great for millions of years especially as food was scarce. Our ancestors were exceptionally good at this behavior which is why they survived periodic famines.

• However, in today's obesogenic world, the food industry has hijacked these mechanisms for their own profit. Through repeated exposure to cues and the formulation of processed foods mixed with addictive ingredients, the food industry has made some brains hyper-reactive to calorie-dense foods.

• This means that a hyper-reactive brain explodes with addictive neurotransmitters such as dopamine, opiates, serotonin, endorphins, and endocannabinoids when processed foods are available. This explosion of neurotransmitters is so vast, that it drains the energy from the rest of the brain. Under these circumstances, the person cannot make a decision, nor remember why overeating is a bad idea, nor exercise restraint. The centers in the brain that create these thoughts are not working when processed foods are available and the foods provoke intense cravings. The longer the hyper-reactive person is exposed to availability, the greater the craving.

• However, even for people who don't have reactive brains, availability of processed foods in a household can lead to a long list of diet-related diseases such as overweight, depression, anxiety, irritability, diabetes, stroke, heart disease, inflammation, joint pain, ADD, dementia, Alzheimer's, and skin eruptions. All members of your household, even children, are exposed to these diseases when processed foods are available in the home.

• It's smart to protect your household from these diseases by following the Do's and Don'ts shown below.

DO'S FOR HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

• Do learn about the difference between helpful unprocessed foods and toxic processed foods.

• Do bring unprocessed foods into the house.

• Do suggest restaurants where your household members can get unprocessed foods.

• Do help your household member prepare unprocessed foods.

- Do enjoy beautiful unprocessed meals at home with your household.

- Do praise your household members for doing the work to keep their brains and bodies protected and functioning optimally.

- If it's absolutely essential for you to keep processed foods in the house, get a lockable container for them and make sure that it's locked and that the key is not in the house.

- Educate household members about the toxic properties of processed foods and why they're not allowed in the house.

- Express gratitude that you have been spared the many ill effects of processed foods.

DON'T'S FOR HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

- Don't bring processed foods into the house.

- Don't eat processed foods in front of household members.

- Don't ask household members to buy processed foods for you.

- Don't drive past processed food outlets.

- Don't talk about processed foods with household members.

- Don't tease or ridicule household members for avoiding toxic processed foods.

- Don't hide foods where household members can find them.

- Don't encourage household members to go to entertainment environments where processed foods are heavily promoted.

By following these suggestions, you may get to watch your household emerge from a surprising range of health problems. You will be pleased that you got this information and acted upon it.