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### **Study: Psychology of Food Choices, What It Takes to Feel Truly Satisfied**

*Tanya Zuckerbrot, MS, RD, conducts study to learn more about what makes a food satisfying to both the belly and brain*

**NORTHRIDGE, CALIF** (September 16, 2009) – New research suggests that there are important psychological factors to consider when making a food choice. While previous research has shown that foods with natural fiber and protein may be the most physiologically satisfying<sup>1-3</sup>, a recent four-week cross-over trial conducted by Tanya Zuckerbrot, MS, RD suggests that true satisfaction from food is multi-dimensional, involving both physical and psychological factors.

Zuckerbrot, who has counseled more than 1,000 patients about their eating habits over the years, designed a study to measure and better understand the physiological satisfaction of food. She measured how different foods impact one's desire to eat again, limit how much one thinks about food, improve one's mood and energy level, and satisfy one's sweet cravings. For the study, Zuckerbrot selected four common snacks with similar calorie levels and nutrient profiles: shelled edamame, low-fat wheat crackers, fruit-flavored yogurt, and a whole soy and fruit bar. She worked with 42 female participants who alternately consumed one of the four test foods each afternoon over a four-week period. Participants completed daily surveys to report their overall satisfaction, general and specific cravings, and hunger levels one hour after consuming each food.

The study confirmed that satisfying hunger has many dimensions – physical and psychological – and the best food choice meets all of these. The whole soy and real fruit bar was rated best by participants at managing hunger and cravings, taste, and perceptions of healthfulness. Although the foods were fairly similar with regard to calories, it was not surprising to Zuckerbrot that the whole soy and real fruit bar ranked highest for managing hunger and cravings, due to its combination of protein, fiber and fats, which are all nutrients supported by past research to be satisfying. Participants found that one hour after eating it they had less of an urge to eat again, had fewer signs of physical hunger and cravings, felt less of a need to eat something to improve their mood or feel more alert, and did not think about food as much when compared to the other three test foods.

“Women want foods that taste good and make them *feel* good, which can mean having higher energy levels, curbing cravings, or it can relate to feeling good about putting that food into your body – many prefer all-natural ingredients in a food, for instance. If the food doesn't do these things, women may not be as satisfied and may still have the urge – even if they aren't hungry – to reach for something else to completely satisfy,” said Zuckerbrot.

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Zuckerbrot concluded that how a food makes you feel is more complex than its nutrient profile alone. The whole soy and real fruit bar scored well on all levels. Whole soy is all-natural and provides complete protein and essential nutrients important to good health. The soy and fruit bar's high ratings based on taste and perceptions of healthfulness speak to the psychological satisfaction of the food. By fulfilling the multiple physical and psychological dimensions of hunger and cravings, the whole soy and real fruit bar was able to best meet participants' overall satisfaction and was, ultimately, rated highest among participants as the food they would be likely to choose again.

In order to lessen cravings and food intake, Zuckerbrot advises her patients and others to ask themselves the following questions one hour after consuming a food: Do I feel energized or sluggish? Am I still thinking about food? Have I satisfied my urges or am I still looking for a little something else? Did my food choice have protein and fiber? Did it contain natural, healthful ingredients?

"When making food choices, people need to think not only about what they're putting in their body with regard to nutrients, but also how that food makes them feel, including taste and energy level. Choose foods that keep both your stomach and your head satisfied, and you'll find yourself less likely to reach for something else to meet an urge," said Zuckerbrot.

Examples of satisfying food choices recommended by Zuckerbrot include:

- **Whole soy and real fruit bar** – Rationale: The whole soy and real fruit combination provides high-quality protein, fiber and fats that satisfy hunger and sustain energy. One example is SOYJOY®, which is healthy, all-natural, convenient and tasty, and satisfies on all levels.
- **High-fiber cereal and granola mix** – Rationale: While even low-fat varieties of granola are loaded with calories and sugar, on the other end of the spectrum, many healthy, low-calorie, high-fiber cereals are a bit boring and bland. The answer: Incorporate a little granola into high-fiber cereal. The fiber will satisfy hunger, while the sweetness of the granola will satisfy sweet cravings.
- **Low-fat popcorn and dried cranberries** – Rationale: Low-fat popcorn is a healthy, whole grain, low-calorie snack, but it can also be dry and lacking in flavor. The answer: Mix in a serving of dried cranberries (or other dried fruit) to add even more fiber and another dimension of flavor.
- **Nuts and chocolate chips** - Rationale: Nuts are a nutrient and fiber-packed food choice; however, they may not always be everything one might be looking for in a food, particularly for those with a sweet tooth. The answer: Mix a tablespoon of dark chocolate chips in with your nuts for some variety. The nuts will satisfy your physical hunger, while the chocolate satisfies your psychological cravings.

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About Pharmavite, LLC:

For more than 35 years, consumers and retailers have trusted Pharmavite for high-quality, science-based products that contribute to optimal health and overall wellness. Pharmavite is a provider of great-tasting, nutritious products, like SOYJOY. SOYJOY is an all-natural, nutrient-rich snack baked with whole soy and real fruit. (Pharmavite.com)

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Sources:

1. Howarth, NC; Saltzman, E; Roberts, SB. Dietary Fiber and Weight Regulation. Nutrition Reviews. 2001, 59: 129-139.
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