

Quick Fixes in Your Diet

What to eat for cravings, dehydration, energy crashes and drowsiness

Most food urges and low-energy moments have simple fixes. This guide gives **five foods for each situation**, how to have them and why they work. The general rule: **pair carbs with protein or fibre, drink enough fluids, and choose the same flavour from a better source**. Use it as a quick reference when a craving or slump hits.

1. Sugar Cravings

Sweet tooth fixes

Why this matters: Cravings often come from a dip in blood sugar or habit. Pair sweetness with fibre, protein or fat so it releases slowly.

FOOD	HOW TO HAVE IT	WHY IT WORKS
Fresh fruit (apple, banana, papaya, berries)	1 fruit with a handful of nuts	Natural sugar with fibre, which slows absorption and satisfies sweetness.
Dates with nuts	1 to 2 dates stuffed with almond or walnut	Concentrated sweetness, with nut protein and fat to blunt a sugar spike.
Greek yogurt or curd with fruit	1 small bowl, add cinnamon if you like	Protein keeps you full, while the fruit gives sweetness.
Dark chocolate (70% or more)	1 to 2 small squares	Strong flavour satisfies quickly, with less sugar than milk chocolate.
Roasted sweet potato or chikoo	1 small piece	Naturally sweet, with fibre and slower digesting carbs.

2. Salty Cravings

Savoury fixes

Why this matters: Salt cravings can reflect habit, sweating or low fluids. Choose crunchy, savoury foods you control the salt in.

FOOD	HOW TO HAVE IT	WHY IT WORKS
Roasted chana or makhana	1 small handful lightly salted	Crunchy and salty, with protein and fibre instead of refined flour.
Salted buttermilk (chaas)	1 glass with cumin and a pinch of salt	Adds fluid and a little sodium, and gentle on the stomach.
Lightly salted nuts or peanuts	1 small handful	Satisfying with healthy fat. Portion it, as calories add up.
Cucumber or carrot with chaat masala	1 bowl	Crunchy and salty-tangy with very few calories.
Olives or pickled veggies	A few pieces	Strong salty taste in a small portion. Watch sodium if you have high blood pressure.

3. Spicy and Tangy Cravings

When you want a kick

Why this matters: Spicy and tangy flavours are about intensity. Get the flavour from whole foods rather than fried snacks.

FOOD	HOW TO HAVE IT	WHY IT WORKS
Sprouts chaat	1 bowl with onion, tomato, lemon, chilli	Big flavour with protein and fibre.
Masala buttermilk	1 glass with green chilli, ginger, curry leaves	Spicy, cooling and hydrating.
Roasted masala makhana or chana	Toss with chilli powder and lemon	Crunchy and spicy at a low calorie cost.
Tomato rasam or pepper rasam	1 cup	Warm, tangy and spicy, and light on the stomach.
Cucumber, raw mango or amla with chilli and salt	A few pieces	Tangy and spicy with vitamin C.

4. Crunchy and Fried Cravings

Chips and bhajji replacements

Why this matters: Often it is the crunch you want. Swap deep-fried for roasted, air-fried or fresh crunch.

FOOD	HOW TO HAVE IT	WHY IT WORKS
Air-fried or baked veg chips	1 bowl	Same crunch with far less oil.
Roasted peanuts or chana	1 handful	Crunch with protein.
Popcorn (plain, home-popped)	2 cups, light salt	High volume and fibre for few calories.
Raw vegetable sticks with hung curd dip	1 bowl	Fresh crunch and protein.
Murmura or puffed rice bhel	1 bowl with onion, tomato, lemon	Light, crunchy and filling for the calories.

5. Creamy, Rich and Comfort Cravings

Heavy food urges

Why this matters: These often show up when tired, stressed or under-eating. Protein and some healthy fat settle them better than sugar.

FOOD	HOW TO HAVE IT	WHY IT WORKS
Paneer or tofu bhurji	1 small bowl	Rich and filling with protein.
Peanut or almond butter on toast or banana	1 tbsp	Creamy, satisfying fat and protein.
Thick curd or hung curd bowl	1 bowl with fruit	Creamy texture and protein.

FOOD	HOW TO HAVE IT	WHY IT WORKS
Avocado or banana smoothie with milk	1 glass	Creamy and filling.
Warm milk with turmeric	1 cup	Comforting, especially at night.

6. Dehydration

Quick fluid fixes

Why this matters: Even mild dehydration can bring tiredness, headache and cravings. Fluids plus a little salt and potassium rehydrate faster than plain water alone.

FOOD	HOW TO HAVE IT	WHY IT WORKS
Coconut water	1 glass	Natural fluid with potassium and some sodium.
Water with lemon and a pinch of salt	1 glass sipped slowly	Replaces fluid and a little sodium.
Buttermilk	1 glass	Fluid, a little salt and protein.
Watermelon, cucumber, muskmelon	1 bowl	Over 90% water, plus some potassium.
Oral rehydration solution (ORS)	As directed on the pack	Best after heavy sweating, vomiting or loose motions.

7. Energy Crashes

The 3 pm slump

Why this matters: Crashes often follow sugary or refined meals. Slow-digesting carbs with protein give steadier energy.

FOOD	HOW TO HAVE IT	WHY IT WORKS
Banana with peanut butter	1 banana, 1 tbsp peanut butter	Quick carbs and sustained energy from fat and protein.
Handful of nuts and seeds	1 handful	Protein, fat and magnesium for steady energy.
Boiled egg or sprouts	1 to 2 eggs or 1 bowl	Protein supports steady blood sugar.
Oats or ragi porridge	1 small bowl	Slow-release carbs and fibre.
Fruit with curd	1 bowl	Quick carbs with protein.

8. Drowsiness and Post-Lunch Sleepiness

Beat the after-lunch dip

Why this matters: Heavy, carb-rich lunches and poor sleep drive drowsiness. Lighter, balanced meals and small tweaks help.

FOOD	HOW TO HAVE IT	WHY IT WORKS
Green tea or black coffee	1 cup, not late in the day	Caffeine boosts alertness. Avoid it near bedtime.
Smaller, protein-rich lunch	Dal, eggs, chicken or paneer with veg, less rice	Less heavy carbs means less sleepiness.
Walk for 5 to 10 minutes	After lunch	Movement lifts alertness and aids digestion.

FOOD	HOW TO HAVE IT	WHY IT WORKS
Water and fruit like orange or apple	1 glass and 1 fruit	Mild dehydration worsens tiredness.
A handful of nuts	Instead of sweets	Steady energy without a crash.

9. Brain Fog and Low Focus

Mental fatigue

Why this matters: Skipped meals, dehydration and poor sleep all dull focus. Steady fuel and fluids help.

FOOD	HOW TO HAVE IT	WHY IT WORKS
Eggs	1 to 2 with breakfast	Choline and protein support brain function.
Walnuts and almonds	1 small handful	Healthy fats and vitamin E.
Berries or citrus fruit	1 bowl	Antioxidants and vitamin C.
Water	Sip through the day	Even small fluid loss can affect concentration.
Oats or whole grains	1 bowl for breakfast	Steady glucose supply for the brain.

10. Hunger Pangs and Bloat Between Meals

Quick settlers

Why this matters: Protein, fibre and fluids help fullness. Some foods are also gentler on the stomach.

FOOD	HOW TO HAVE IT	WHY IT WORKS
Curd or buttermilk	1 bowl or glass	Protein and probiotics, gentle on digestion.
Soaked chia or sabja seeds	1 tsp in a glass of water	Swell to add fullness.
Cucumber, papaya or banana	1 bowl or fruit	Hydrating and easy on the stomach.
Fennel seeds (saunf) or ginger tea	A pinch after meals or 1 cup	Traditionally used to ease bloating.
Roasted chana or sprouts	1 small bowl	Fibre and protein that keep hunger away.

Note: This is general nutrition information written from general knowledge, not medical advice. Constant cravings, extreme thirst or fatigue can have medical causes, so see a doctor if they persist. People with diabetes, high blood pressure, kidney disease or allergies should adjust food choices (especially salt, sugar and potassium) with their doctor or dietitian.