

Prevention Strategies

You can do three things to help prevent the main causes of death in North Carolina. You can exercise, eat right, and avoid smoking. Your tribe must eat right to survive. As always, your survival tools are education and action.

Your challenge is to evaluate vending machine food.

Note: Annette Harris and Mitch Million, two instructors at Central Carolina Community College, each had a class working on this challenge to **Replace Those Empty Calories**. Their project plans, accompanied by illustrative student work, are given sequentially below—kind of like two vending machines in a row!

Survival Plan 1: Evaluating Vending Machine Food

By Annette M. Harris
Central Carolina Community College

Background

Level: My High Intermediate/Advanced students carried out this survival plan (aka project plan). It can be adjusted for other levels

Objectives: Students will

- identify and evaluate unhealthy vending machine and snack food
- identify and evaluate more nutritious substitutes

Time: Our class meets daily for three hours. For this challenge, we used the computer room for two classes. In our third class, students identified and evaluated vending machine

snack foods and wrote short papers. We spent a total of three classes or nine hours on this project.

Education and Action

Introduction

To introduce this challenge, I used a *Guess the Sugar* activity from the North Carolina Community College ESL Virtual Library. To find this activity, go to www.nc-net.info/ESL/SALSA.php. Scroll down and click on the lesson titled *General Nutrition*. Scroll through the lesson to the *Guess the Sugar* activity. This activity shows the alarming amount of sugar in certain foods and drinks. It makes a big impression on the students.

Learning Online

I made copies of the General Nutrition Test in the same lesson referenced above and passed them out to the students. They answered the test questions and then they went online to check their answers.



Next, students scrolled down in the *General Nutrition* lesson and we read aloud (from the computers) the information about Building Healthy Meals and Snacks.

We used three additional websites for general exploration and specific activities:

- <http://www.latinonutrition.org/caminomagico.html>. Click on *Two Days of Latino Meals* in the menu on the left of your screen. I gave students a printout from this website: *Two Sample Days of Healthy Latino Meals*. As an activity, they wrote their own samples of healthy meals.
- <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/cdic/cpns/worksite/FitBusinessKit.htm> I provided students with a printout of *Vending Machine Food and Beverage Standards*. (Click on *Vending Machine Food and Beverage Standards* in the center of your screen. Then click on the same title on the ensuing screen to locate a four-page pdf printable document.) I wanted students to have this information for long-term take home reference.
- <http://www.english-test.net/esl/learn/english/grammar/ai315/esl-test.php> . Students took an online nutrition test--*Nutrition Questions Test (1)*--at this website.

I wanted students to read and use these websites because the information could help them with the next activity, so I made sure they had some exploration time without having to search for certain specified things.

Making Choices

For this activity, I collected empty snack food wrappers and bottles from students at school. I also brought in items from home.

I put these empty wrappers and bottles on two tables and divided the students into two groups.



Their challenge was to (1) identify each item as “healthy or unhealthy” and (2) explain why they made those choices.



Each group worked at a different table. Both groups were working at the same time, but I thought it would be more interesting to divide the students and see what the differences were in each group’s decisions.

Then I led each group through an evaluation process (ingredients, calories, sugar content, fat, sodium, etc). They made changes (as needed) afterwards, and we grouped all the snack foods as either “unhealthy” or “healthy.”

Unhealthy Snack Foods



Healthy Snack Foods



Committing Our Choices to Writing

Each student picked one unhealthy item, documented it, and wrote how they thought it rated nutritionally. Next, they chose a more nutritious substitute and wrote why they felt it was a better choice. Finally, they wrote sentences telling why they might choose vending machine food, how often they do so, and what they will think about when they see a vending machine now.

Results

We Met Our Challenge!

Samples of student work--along with pictures of the authors--follow this project plan. Student writing is typed to reflect the spelling and punctuation that the students used.

Project Follow Up:

I plan to ask my students to:

- 1) Record for one week the snacks they choose from vending machines or buy at the store.
- 2) Evaluate whether their choices are healthy or unhealthy.
- 3) Tell what they thought about when they made their selections.

Teacher's Notes:

I was surprised that the students did not seem to know a lot about meal planning and how to read labels. I believed they walked away from this project motivated to put into practice the information they learned. We learn by repetition, so I plan to continue to include lessons about meal planning and about healthy/unhealthy snacks and vending machine food.

Evaluating Vending Machine Food

Item: *Dr. Pepper*

How it rates nutritionally: *This is an unhealthy food because contain to many sugar (40g) and to many calories (150).*

Item: *Vitamin water*

How it rates nutritionally: *This is a better choice because contain triple antioxidants and not contain sodium and contain many vitamins.*

I choose vending machine food sometimes. I might choose vending machine food because some foods might be healthy. When I see a vending machine now I will think about choosing a more healthy product.

Maria Moreno



Evaluating Vending Machine Food

Item: ***KitKat***

How it rates nutritionally: ***This is an unhealthy food because contain to many sugar (22g) and to many calories (220).***

Item: ***Toasted crackers***

How it rates nutritionally: ***This is a better choice because the ingredients contain are organic and no contain cholesterol and contains fiber, whole wheat flour and vegetable oil.***

I choose vending machine food only sometimes. I might choose vending machine food because it's easy to buy. When I see a vending machine now I will think about why they no put only healthy food there.

Luz Zulema Saenz



Evaluating Vending Machine Food

Item: **Crunchy Cheetos**

How it rates nutritionally: ***This is an unhealthy food because the sodium is 290mg, artificial flavor, artificial color and it have a lot of fat.***

Item: **Newman-O's Chocolate Cookies**

How it rates nutritionally: ***This is a better choice because it's organic, natural flavor and it have good fats (peanuts and nuts) and also organic unbleached wheat flour and sugar.***

I sometimes choose vending machine food. I might choose vending machine food because I might be in a hurry. When I see a vending machine now I will think about carbohydrate, sodium, fat and sugar.

Martha Olivares Juarez



Evaluating Vending Machine Food

Item: ***M & M's***

How it rates nutritionally: ***This is an unhealthy food because it contains a lot of sugar, saturated fat, and has a lot of dyes.***

Item: **Larabar Cashew Cookie**

How it rates nutritionally: ***This is a better choice because it is low in sodium (0g), protein (6g), and it contains many vitamins. No much ingredients (cashews and dates only), no added sugar.***

I choose vending machine food everyday at my work, twice a day. I might choose vending machine food because it's closer (nearby) and I might find cheaper food. When I see a vending machine now I will think about help my body to get healthy and the better way is "healthy foods" so I will always see labels of every product.



Miguel Angel Certez Tlapa

Evaluating Vending Machine Food

Item: **Twix Chocolate Cookie**

How it rates nutritionally: ***This is an unhealthy food because it have a lot sugar (27g) and enriched wheat flour.***

Item: **Mini Pretzels**

How it rates nutritionally: ***This is a better choice because it have protein (4g), and fiber (1g).***

I choose vending machine food sometimes. I might choose vending machine food because I might be hungry. When I see a vending machine now I will think about fiber and protein.

Yolanda Trejo



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Note: Annette Harris and Mitch Million, two instructors at Central Carolina Community College, each had a class working on this challenge to **Replace Those Empty Calories**. Both of their project plans, accompanied by student work, are included.

Survival Plan 2: Choosing Alternatives to Junk Food

By Mitch Million

Central Carolina Community College

Level: Intermediate to Advanced

Objectives: Students will

- compare and contrast their own self-described “wellness” and come up with a healthy eating alternative
- research, verbalize, and, lastly, write about their choices

Time: Our class meets six hours per week. We completed this project in one week by using one three-hour class for discussion and the other for writing, editing, and revision.

Education and Action

Opening Discussion

[Note: For information on Maria Soto's presentation, see the survival plan *The Survey Says . . .* in the folder on *What's Killing Us in North Carolina.*]

Following Maria Soto's presentation to us the previous week, we devoted one three-hour session to discussing diabetes and the associated health problems that accompany it. We spoke at length about diet, exercise, and other aspects of a person's lifestyle that may contribute to or help prevent diabetes. We ended by talking about personal choices and, particularly, the consequences of dietary choices and the circumstances that sometimes affect those choices.

A Visit to the Snack Machine

We visited a snack machine and analyzed the offered items. We then returned to the classroom and discussed the aforementioned snacks. After the discussion, each student wrote an essay comparing and contrasting the junk food/beverage of their choice and a healthier alternative.

Our Findings and Choices

Student writings are shown on the following pages. They are typed to reflect the spelling and punctuation that the students used.

A HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE TO JUNK FOOD

Dario Vasquez

Doritos and cookies are full of sugars, preservatives and are made with oils that contain trans fats. A better choice for a snack would be: an apple or banana. They contain carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are the body's main source of energy.



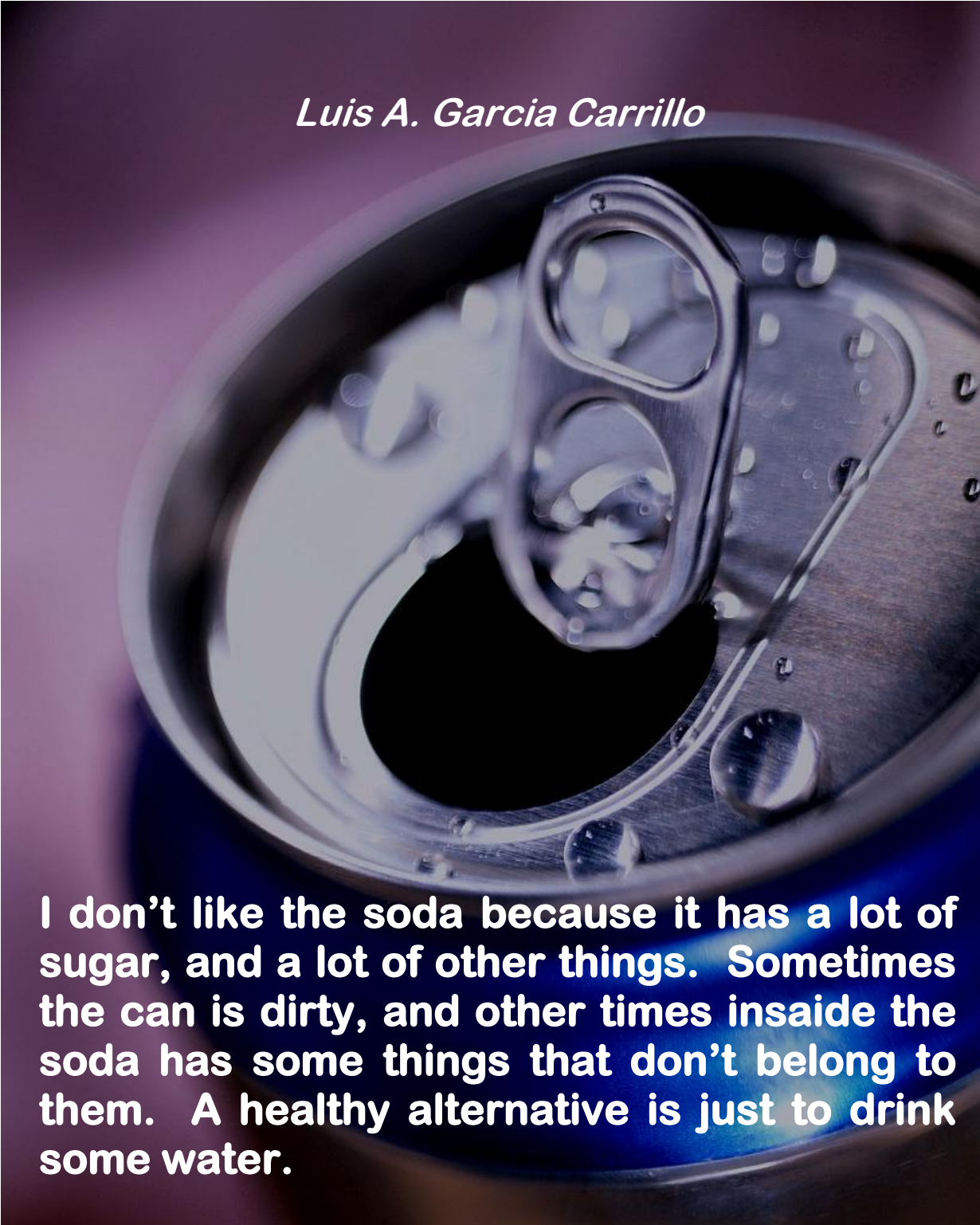
A HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE TO JUNK FOOD

Marcelino Jimenez

I use to eat some junk food very often, including sweet drinks. But after reading magazines about nutrition, I found out that the body needs minerals, vitamins, protein, antioxidants and healthy oils. Now with the information I have, I changed my diet. although, I still eat nabs, because I like them knowingly tha are not healtly. But I found an alternative to nabs and it is apples.

A HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE TO JUNK FOOD

Luis A. Garcia Carrillo



I don't like the soda because it has a lot of sugar, and a lot of other things. Sometimes the can is dirty, and other times inside the soda has some things that don't belong to them. A healthy alternative is just to drink some water.

A HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE TO JUNK FOOD

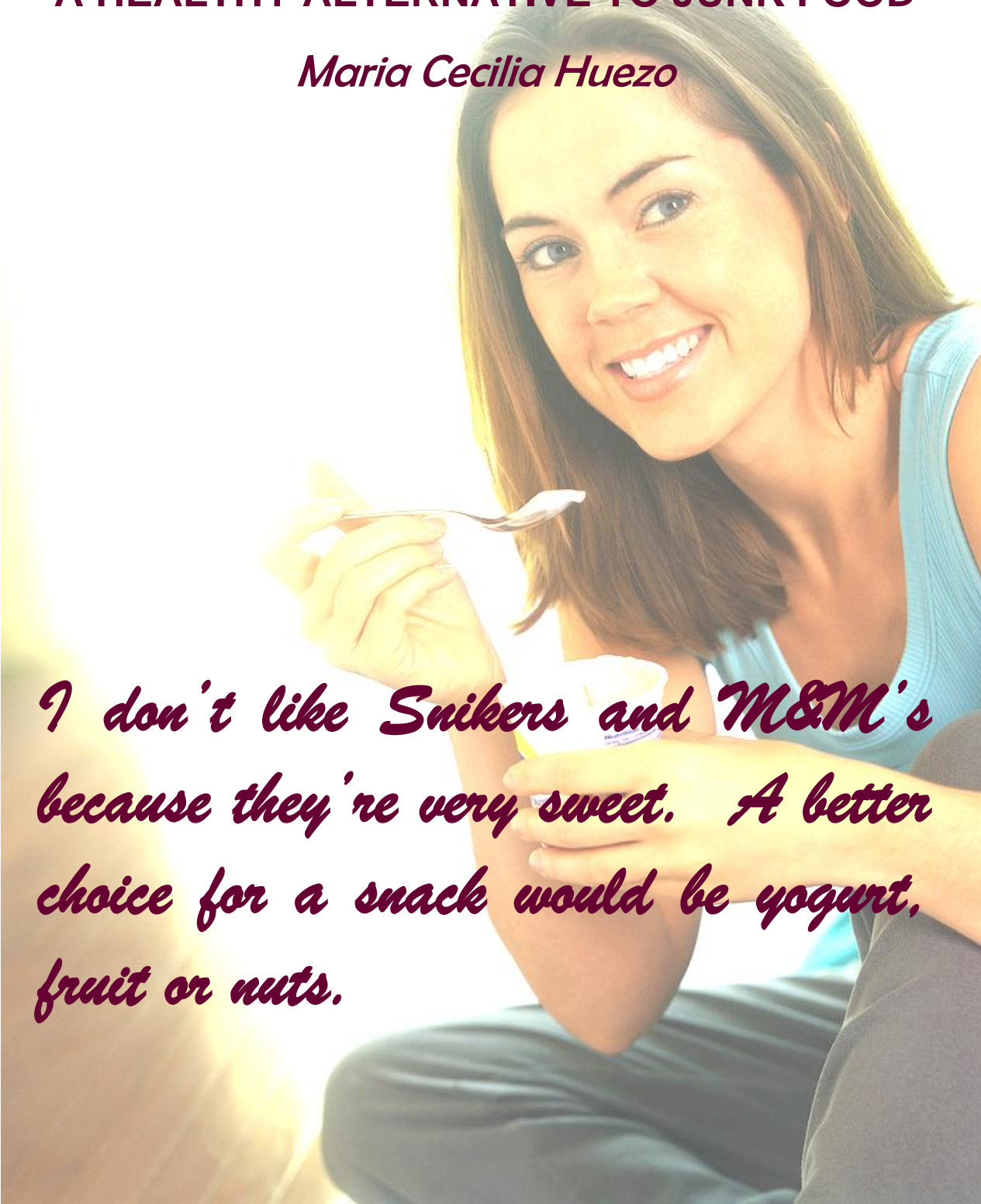
Ricardo Velazquez-Lopez

I am trying to drink less Coca-Cola. Because I don't know what it has in it, but doctors do not recommend drinking them. Instead of drinking any type of Soda, I try to drink water, juice or other natural drinks.



A HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE TO JUNK FOOD

Maria Cecilia Huezo



I don't like Snickers and M&M's because they're very sweet. A better choice for a snack would be yogurt, fruit or nuts.

A HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE TO JUNK FOOD

Miguel Borrayo



Junk Foods

Sodas
Doritos
Fritos
Cookies
Nachos

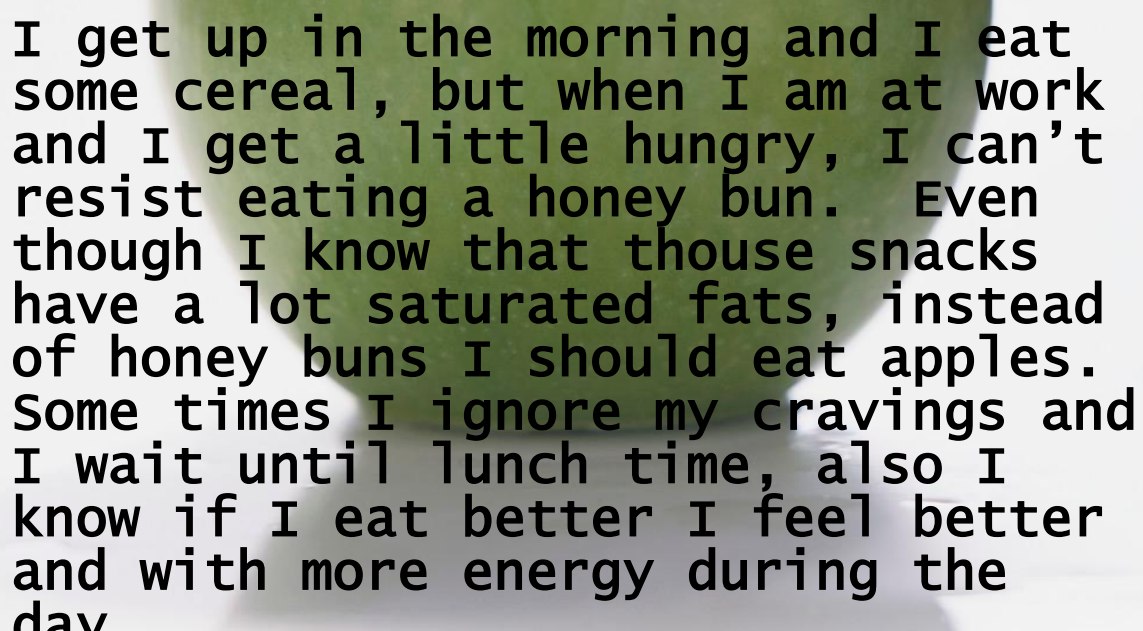


Healthy Alternatives

Fresh fruit as apples,
grapes, oranges,
bananas, etc.
Natural fruit juices
Peanuts
Almonds
Sunflower Seeds
Pumpkin Seeds
Carrots
Celery

A HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE TO JUNK FOOD

Rene Cadena



I get up in the morning and I eat some cereal, but when I am at work and I get a little hungry, I can't resist eating a honey bun. Even though I know that those snacks have a lot saturated fats, instead of honey buns I should eat apples. Some times I ignore my cravings and I wait until lunch time, also I know if I eat better I feel better and with more energy during the day.