Opinion: It’s a conspiracy to keep you fat

By Deborah Cohen, Los Angeles Times

At this time of year, a lot of Americans have vowed to develop more healthful habits. Unfortunately, most of those who have made weight loss resolutions will fail. But it won’t be entirely their fault.

Americans today live in a food swamp. We are constantly exposed to marketing and advertising designed to keep food on our minds and treats at our fingertips. If you go out to dinner, you will probably be served more food than you need and eat more than you should. At the market, you’ll be encouraged to buy unhealthful foods. It’s not easy to avoid or ignore all the forces that trigger bad eating habits.

Humans are hard-wired to notice food over other items. Once we perceive food, through sight, smell, hearing, taste or touch, we find ourselves wanting to eat, even if we are already full. This was no doubt a useful adaptation as humans evolved. But today, in a time of plentiful food, such impulses aren’t in a person’s best interest.

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