

# EMOTIONAL

AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO MANAGING



# EATING

EMOTIONAL EATING!

## REAL HUNGER

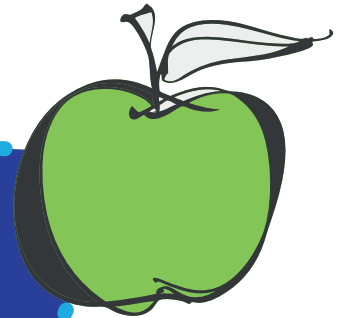
- Comes on slowly, beginning 3-4 hours after you last ate.
- It does not demand a particular food - you are hungry enough to eat anything!
- You feel satisfied after eating.

## EMOTIONAL HUNGER

- Comes on quickly, like a flash of lighting (!) and is triggered by emotions.
- It demands certain foods or drinks such as chocolate, crisps and alcohol.
- You don't feel satisfied after eating and it is hard to stop = **BLACK HOLE EFFECT**

I NEED TO EAT!

Is it real or emotional hunger?  
Try the apple test!  
'Do you want an apple?'



This is real  
hunger!  
Have the apple!

This is  
emotional  
hunger!

Yes, I want  
an apple.

No, I don't want an  
apple, I want...  
chocolate!



# EMOTIONAL HUNGER

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## Avoid 'eating your emotions'

**DO YOU TURN TO FOOD EVERY TIME YOU FEEL EMOTIONAL?!**

**NOURISH NOT PLACATE!** Food is quite simply here to nourish us and should not be used to comfort us or as a tool to punish us.

**EAT WHEN YOU ARE HUNGRY.** Eat for the right reasons (hunger), but not for the wrong reasons (stress, boredom, anger.....). Use the flowchart 'apple test' to help you distinguish between real and emotional hunger.

**EMOTIONAL EATING IS ADDICTIVE.** If you reach for food every time you feel emotional, it starts becoming a habit. It's then very easy for this habit to spiral out of control.

**EMOTIONAL EATING CAN BE A VICIOUS CIRCLE.** It can cause weight gain and unhappiness, with people continuing to gain weight as they 'eat' their unhappiness.

**FORGET COMPLICATED DIETS.** The only rule you need to follow is 'Eat when you are hungry, but not for any other reason'.

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## Find non-food related ways to deal with your emotions!

The first thing to do is take a deep, slow breath and get yourself away from food. **Acknowledge your emotions.**

**WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON?** Are you tired, stressed, angry, upset, fed up, bored?

**There is no point in eating if you are not hungry** and you need to find non-food related strategies which comfort you instead of food.

**TIRED?** Try tisanes, tea or coffee. Breathe! Make looking after yourself the priority. Sit down, rest and if possible get to bed.

**ANGRY?** Channel that anger effectively. Go for a brisk walk and march it off, pull up some weeds in the garden (my favourite!), kick a ball, do some yoga.

**STRESSED?** Take another 5 deep breaths, try a 5 minute meditation or take yourself outside for 5 minutes.

**UPSET?** Call a close friend, find a picture of something that makes you smile, have a nice soothing cup of tea

**BORED?** You are not a child and should be able to amuse yourself quite happily! We also don't need to constantly be in activity mode. It's ok to do nothing! Read, watch a film, call a friend, go for a walk...

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## Tips to manage emotional eating

**STOP 1 MINUTE RULE.** If you find yourself on auto pilot heading to the kitchen cupboards, tell yourself that you are going to '**stop and do nothing for 1 minute**'. Sometimes this 1 minute gives you a chance to 'check in' with yourself and realise that you do not need to eat anything.

**PUT IT ON A PLATE.** Respect your food and respect yourself. If you find yourself randomly hunting through the fridge or the kitchen cupboard, taking a biscuit here, then 2 squares of chocolate, then a piece of cheese, then another biscuit. **STOP! Take a plate and put the food you want to eat on it.** This gives you a natural visual guide to the quantities you are eating. For example, putting a 100g bar of chocolate on a plate looks 'a lot', yet it is very easy to eat this amount when you are diving into the cupboard and eating a square at a time.

**SLOW DOWN!** Emotional eating demands that we devour our food, yet, our satiety signalling (the feeling of being full) **only tends to start signalling that we've eaten enough after 20 minutes.** There's no rush. Take it slow and you might even find that you can stop yourself after 2 biscuits!

**PUT A MIRROR IN THE KITCHEN.** And, sit in front of it while you eat, looking at yourself from time to time. **Do you look liked a crazed cannibal or a serene rabbit?** Would you really want people to see you eating like this?

**DON'T EAT ALONE.** Emotional eating is something we do alone, almost as if we subconsciously know that we should not be doing it. **Don't stay up late once everyone else is in bed** and keep your trips to the kitchen at a minimum if you feel the urge to eat emotionally.

**BE KIND TO YOURSELF.** It's all about practice, not perfection! If despite your best intentions, you have an emotional eating episode, **take a step back and think about why you did this** and how you can avoid doing this again.

## Damage limitation! STILL struggling?

If you are going to eat emotionally, aim for foods which are high volume, low calorie and can't be eaten too quickly! **TRY:** Nuts in their shells, chewing gum, a large carrot, raw vegetables, a bowl of fruit, olives, cherry tomatoes...!