

health talk

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Emotional Eating And Ways To Cope

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Eating is something we do to nourish our bodies with vital nutrients. Sometimes we turn to food in response to certain emotions. Whether you feel angry, sad, bored -even excited- food can act as a buffer against these emotions, something 82 % of you know all too well.



Stress is part of our everyday lives and can create the same physiological responses as anger, such as increased heart rate and blood pressure. Loneliness can result to sadness, and sad people can often become withdrawn. Especially if your dealing with grief or spending a lot of time alone, it's easy to turn to comfort foods or soothe yourself with foods that you associate with happier memories.

So where do you start if you want to stop? The first step is awareness, recognizing you do eat emotionally-and WHY? Each time you reach for foods, ask yourself, "Am I really hungry or am I just responding to something else that is happening?" Is it out of boredom, loneliness, or an unhappy relationship? Tracking your food can help, especially if you note the times you eat and how you were feeling before, during, and after. By tracking your food more regularly, you could notice trends, and then pinpoint your true feelings from there.

Here are some alternatives that can help you deal with most common emotions that lead to eating:

- * Remove yourself from the situation. If you had an altercation with a friend or family member, take some time away from each other to calm down
- * Take some deep breaths. Deep breathing has shown to reduce blood pressure and promote feelings of calmness.
- * Exercise. It's a known stress buster and you may even find it helps you deal with anger. It boosts mood, releases endorphins (feel-good chemicals in the brain), and has been reported to be more addictive than drugs.
- * Listen to music. We can all think of some songs that calm us down.
- * Play with pets. Animals have unconditional love and promote health and emotional wellness
- * Pay attention to what you consume. Make a new rule that you will not multi-task while you eat to help avoid mindless overeating.
- * Develop a new hobby. Even without cash to spare, you can learn to knit, join a local book club, yoga classes, or train for a 5K race.
- * Read. We don't spend enough time reading these days, while you may claim you don't have time, everyone has a few minutes here and there.
- * Connect with friends and loved ones. Some might argue that we feel bored during this digital age because we're missing real-life interaction and friendships.

With an arsenal of activities you can do besides eating, you're on the right path to stop the emotional eating cycle. With so many enjoyable experiences in life, food doesn't have to take center stage.