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Your Health Matters



Emotional Eating How to Eat Healthier

When times are tough or emotions run high, it's common to turn to food for comfort. This is called emotional or stress eating, and it happens to everyone. But eating to calm our emotions can become a bad habit if we don't pay attention. The next time you're stressed, you might reach for junk food or sweets to feel better. But this relief is only temporary, and stress eating can stop you from learning healthier ways to handle emotions.

To avoid stress eating:

1. Label your hunger.

Pay attention to your eating patterns. Learn to tell the difference between physical hunger and hunger driven by emotions. Knowing that you're stress eating is half the battle. It will help you be more aware of your feelings instead of ignoring them.

2. Stay ahead of your emotions.

We all have good days and bad days. Bad days can make us more likely to give in to cravings. Check in with yourself each day to see how you're feeling and how you're managing stress.

3. Don't go hungry.

We're more likely to grab unhealthy foods when we're hungry. Make sure to keep healthy snacks available, like low-fat yogurt with granola, nuts, carrots with hummus, oranges and bananas. These are all healthy options that don't take much prep time.

4. Slow down and eat mindfully.

Eat with purpose and pay attention to the foods you're eating. Choose foods that nourish your body and give you energy. Fresh foods that aren't processed are a good choice. Treat yourself to a favorite dessert for special occasions.

5. Drink water.

Sometimes when we think we're hungry, we're actually thirsty. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water.

6. Distract yourself to avoid cravings.

If you feel the urge to eat when you're stressed, spend a few minutes doing something else. This can help you reset your thoughts and find other ways to de-stress.

For example:

- Listen to music
- Read
- Practice deep breathing
- Meditate
- Color
- Write down 1-3 things you're grateful for
- Make a cup of tea
- Spend a few minutes outdoors
- Call a friend
- Go for a walk
- Plan a healthy meal
- Picture your "happy place"

7. Find an exercise routine that works for you.

Being active and moving your body will help boost your mood, relieve stress and improve your overall health. You'll also be more likely to choose healthy foods.

For more information, see your on-site clinic provider.

Tips to Boost Your Liver Health

We don't often talk about our liver, but did you know it's the largest internal organ in the body? Your liver is about the size of a football, and it sits just under the ribs on the right side of your body.

The liver has many jobs, including flushing toxins and bacteria from the blood, getting rid of old red blood cells, helping the body break down what you eat and drink and regulating cholesterol. It's also a gland because it makes many proteins and hormones the body needs.

Many conditions, including infections and cancer, as well as chemicals, alcohol and drug use can damage the liver. And while the liver can often repair itself after injury, sometimes it can't. Studies show most liver problems — 9 out of 10 — are due to infections or poor lifestyle choices and could be prevented.¹ Knowing how to keep your liver healthy is important.

July 28 is World Hepatitis Day

Hepatitis is swelling or inflammation of the liver that happens because of certain infections, autoimmune disease or injury. Hepatitis can lead to serious liver disease and cancer.

According to the World Health Organization, someone dies every 30 seconds from a hepatitis-related illness.



Watch for and report any symptoms of liver problems, as well as if liver disease runs in your family.

Jaundice — a yellowing of the skin and the whites of the eyes — is the most common sign something is wrong with your liver. Other symptoms include feeling very tired, itchy skin, a loss of appetite, dark urine, pale stool, nausea and/or vomiting, belly pain or swelling and confusion.



Be mindful of how much alcohol you drink.

Too much alcohol can damage the liver. It's best to limit yourself to less than 2 drinks a day for men and 1 for women — a standard drink is 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or about 1.5 ounces of liquor or distilled spirits. Ideally, have several alcohol-free days each week to give your liver a break.



Cut out added sugar, processed foods and unhealthy fats.

Aim to eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, beans, fish and healthy fats found in nuts, olive oils and avocado. Be sure to thoroughly wash fruits and vegetables before eating them to remove any pesticides and chemicals.



Make sure you are on the right medications.

When used over a long period of time, certain medicines, combinations of medicines and supplements can affect your liver function. Take the time to review all of the medications you take with your care team.



Adopt healthy habits.

This includes washing your hands, getting regular physical activity, keeping to a healthy weight, eating healthy foods, getting enough sleep and practicing safe sex (one way hepatitis — an inflammation of the liver — is spread).



Stay current with vaccines and get screened.

Several viruses can cause hepatitis. There are vaccines to protect against hepatitis A and B. Many people with hepatitis C don't know they have it.

¹Source: [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)