



HEALTHY TODAY

EMOTIONAL EATING

Emotional eating is when people use food as a way to deal with feelings instead of to satisfy hunger. We've all been there, finishing a whole bag of chips out of boredom or downing cookie after cookie while cramming for a big test. But when done a lot – especially without realizing it – emotional eating can affect weight, health, and overall well-being.

Not many of us make the connection between **eating** and **our feelings**. But understanding what drives emotional eating can help people take steps to change it. One of the biggest myths about emotional eating is that it's prompted by negative feelings. Yes, people often turn to food when they're stressed out, lonely, sad, anxious, or bored. But emotional eating can be linked to positive feelings too, like the romance of sharing dessert on Valentine's Day or the celebration of a holiday feast.

Sometimes emotional eating is tied to major life events, like a death or a divorce. More often, though, it's the countless little daily stresses that cause someone to seek comfort or distraction in food.

People learn emotional eating patterns: A child who is given candy after an achievement may grow up using candy as a reward for a job well done. A kid who is given cookies as a way to stop crying may learn to link cookies with comfort. It's not easy to "unlearn" patterns of emotional eating. But it is possible. And it starts with an awareness of what's going on.

<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/emotional-eating.html#cat:dieting>

HUNGER

Physical vs. *Emotional*

- Is gradual
- Open to all different foods
- Based in the stomach
- Is patient
- Occurs out of physical need
- Involves deliberate choices & awareness of eating
- Stops eating when full
- Realizes eating is necessary

- Is sudden
- Is usually for a specific food
- "Above the neck"
- Is urgent
- Paired with an upsetting emotion
- Involves automatic or absent-minded eating
- Does not stop when full
- Feels guilty

Adapted from Roger Gould, M.D., "Shrink Yourself"

Healthy Today is Community Health Centers of Greater Dayton's informational newsletter on healthy living, created with the goal of helping you and your family stay healthy and thriving every day!

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www.communityhealthdayton.org/healthyat80

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"COMFORT" FOODS

We all have our own comfort foods. Interestingly, they may vary according to moods and gender. One study found that happy people seem to want to eat things like pizza, while sad people prefer ice cream and cookies. Bored people crave salty, crunchy things, like chips. This can make you wonder: Why does no one take comfort in carrots and celery sticks? High-fat foods, like ice cream, may activate chemicals in the body that create a sense of contentment and fulfillment. This almost addictive quality may actually make you reach for these foods again when feeling upset.

⇒ **Breaking the Cycle:** Managing emotional eating means finding other ways to deal with the situations and feelings that make someone turn to food.

⇒ For example, do you come home from work each day and automatically head to the kitchen? Stop and ask yourself, "Am I really hungry?" Is your stomach growling? Are you having difficulty concentrating or feeling irritable? If these signs point to hunger, choose something light and healthy to take the edge off until dinner. Not really hungry? If looking for food after work has just become part of your routine, think about why. Then try to change the routine. Instead of eating when you get in the door, take a few minutes to transition from one part of your day to another. Go over the things that happened that day. Acknowledge how they made you feel: Happy? Grateful? Excited? Angry? Worried? Jealous? Left out? .

⇒ **Explore why you're eating and try to find a replacement activity:**

- ⇒ If you're bored or lonely, call or text friends or family.
- ⇒ If you're stressed out, try a yoga routine. Or listen to some feel-good tunes and let off some steam by jogging in place, doing jumping jacks, or dancing around your room until the urge to eat passes.
- ⇒ If you're tired, rethink your bedtime routine. Tiredness can feel a lot like hunger, and food won't help if sleepless nights are causing daytime fatigue.
- ⇒ If you're eating to procrastinate, get that task over with. You'll feel better afterwards (honestly!).



BACK TO SCHOOL BUTTERFLIES

Whether their summer was full of activities or complaints about being bored, kids often have a tough time making the back-to-school transition.

As with any new situation, give kids time to adjust. Remind them that everyone feels a little nervous about the start of the school year and that it will be an everyday routine in no time.

Focus on the positive things about going back to school, such as hanging out with old friends, meeting new classmates, and getting involved in sports and other activities times.

It's also important to talk to kids about what worries them and offer support: Are they afraid they won't make new friends or get along with their teachers? Is the thought of schoolwork stressing them out?

Are they worried about the bully from last year?

It's normal to be anxious in any new situation. But a few kids develop real physical symptoms, such as headaches or stomachaches, at the start of school. If you're concerned your child's worries go beyond the normal back-to-school jitters, speak with your child's doctor, teacher, or school counselor.

BACKPACK SAFETY

When used properly, backpacks are incredibly handy. But backpacks can strain muscles and joints and may cause back pain if they're too heavy or not used correctly.

"What should I look for in a backpack?"

Get a lightweight pack: Find one that doesn't add a lot of weight to the load. For example, leather packs weigh more than canvas backpacks.

The backpack should have:

- Two wide, padded shoulder straps: Straps that are too narrow can dig into shoulders.
- A padded back: It not only provides increased comfort, but also protects from being poked by sharp objects or edges (pencils, rulers, notebooks, etc.) inside the pack.
- A waist belt: This helps spread the weight more evenly across the body.
- Multiple compartments: These help spread the weight throughout the pack.

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/backpack.html#catlearning>

Did you know...

Approximately 55 percent of students carry a backpack heavier than the recommended guidelines of 10-15 percent of the student's total body weight.



GREET THE DAY IN A NEW WAY

If you haven't been hopping out of bed each morning, ready to crush your to-do list, these handy techniques might help.

- ♦ We've all had one of those days: groggy all morning, lethargic through lunch, and cranky all afternoon. It would be nice if bedtimes and wake-up routines were only important in our childhood years, but adults can also benefit from a bit of early-hour planning.



Ready!

- ♦ Quantity Counts: The foundation to a good morning starts with getting the right amount of sleep. Even adults need a solid 7-9 hours (yes, really!), so make sure you hit the sack at the right time the night before.
- ♦ Feel the Rhythm: Quantity is important, but timing also matters. Your body and brain work best with a set wake-up time to keep your biological rhythms synced. Don't vary your wake-up time too much — it can throw off your system from its natural routine.
- ♦ Nightly Recharge: If you think you can skimp on sleep for a few nights and make up for it with a lazy day later on, think again. Make sure you're getting a full charge of sleep every night to so you're ready for the next day.

Set!

- ♦ Snoozing Sucks: Turning your car on and off isn't the best way to get it warmed up in the morning, and it's no good for your brain, either. Hitting snooze to nod off for another restless 5 minutes may only leave you groggy when you wake up for a second (or third) time.
- ♦ Good Morning, Sunshine: If you can, wake up to bright, natural sunlight streaming through your window. If you can't, at least get indoor lights going (and no, the glare of your cell phone screen isn't enough). Research suggests that morning light can help you wake up more naturally and quickly.
- ♦ Get Moving: And not just to check your email — in fact, skip the tech if you can. Instead, get in a morning walk to start the day off right. Good sleep and exercise go hand in hand: moving your body will help you wake up in the morning and sleep better later that night.

GO!

- ♦ Pep Talks: If the day seems daunting, set aside a few minutes to get pumped. Maybe it's meditation or prayer, or a bit of yoga — you do you! Focusing on your mental wellbeing for ten minutes can help with stress and anxiety over the next ten hours.

https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/sleep/how-to-establish-a-wakeup-routine-for-a-good-morning-every-morning?utm_source=healthy+for+good+fy+2122&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Healthy%20For%20Good%20-%2082821&utm_content=hero+cta

CANNED

PEARS 5 WAYS



PEAR PARTY SALSA

- + Canned pears
- + Apple
- + Kiwi
- + Orange
- + Honey
- + Lemon juice
- + Cinnamon graham crackers (optional)

PEAR SALAD

- + Canned pears
- + Salad greens
- + Carrots
- + White vinegar
- + Yogurt (non-fat)
- + Cucumber
- + Orange juice
- + Walnuts
- + Green beans
- + Tomato
- + Raisins



PEAR QUESADILLA

- + Canned pears
- + Flour tortillas
- + Pepper jack cheese
- + Mozzarella cheese
- + Dried basil
- + Onion
- + Olive oil

FROZEN PEAR POPS

- + Canned pears
- + Yogurt (non-fat)
- + Orange juice



COBB SALAD WITH PEARS

- + Canned pears
- + Mesclun mixed greens
- + Parmesan cheese
- + Carrots
- + Walnuts
- + Pear juice
- + Apple cider vinegar
- + Honey
- + Dijon mustard
- + Salt
- + Pepper
- + Olive oil

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