

HOW TO BEAT EMOTIONAL EATING

Are you feeding you stomach, or feeding your feelings?

Often the answer is both. We need to eat to fuel the body, but sometimes we eat to satisfy our feelings. It could be particular foods because we're happy, sad or even bored, but when we eat for reasons other than physical hunger, it's emotional eating.

Eating when we're not really hungry is a sure way to add unnecessary calories (and kilos!) that can quickly ruin your weight management programme. So how do you beat emotion eating? Know the difference and then manage it. Knowing the difference:

Emotional eating appears suddenly, physical hunger comes on gradually. Even if you're full, you're more likely to keep eating if it's to satisfy a feeling. If your stomach is growling for food, you'll eat almost anything to fill the gap. If you crave a particular food such as ice cream, chocolate or potato crisps, you're probably eating to feed a feeling. Emotional eating feels like it you need to eat the food you crave instantly, whereas if it's physical hunger, it can wait. You may feel guilty after emotional eating, but if you're physically hungry you won't. Managing emotional eating: See if you can recognise what feelings cause you to want to eat emotionally. Take your mind off the craving by doing something else - try going for a walk, do some housework or talk to a friend. Find a comfort food that's a healthy alternative, so when the feeling comes you've got an option that isn't junk food. If you're on a diet, elimination of all unhealthy foods can do more harm than good. For example, if you can't live without chocolate, don't deny yourself completely. Have a small portion, and then put it away. It's about moderation, not elimination. Sometimes it's just a taste you need. So try eating only a few bites. You're likely to remember the satisfying experience, rather than the guilty feeling after you've finished the whole pack!

If you recognise that you're eating for an emotion, remember that whatever your food choice, learn how to control it and use moderation.

Published Date: **10 Oct 2013**