

BREAKING THE BOND

Lunch and Learn Handout & Resources

What is Emotional Eating?

Emotional Eating is the practice of consuming large quantities of food usually “comfort” or junk foods in response to feelings instead of hunger.

- Experts estimate 75% of overeating is caused by emotions.
- Food can bring short-term comfort during times of emotional distress.

Are Emotions the Cause of Your Sugar Cravings?

- Sugar tricks our body and mind into serving as this emotional crutch. The release of dopamine sets up a reward system that can keep us craving more.



How to Tell the Difference?

Emotional Cravings

- Comes on suddenly
- Very specific
- Instant gratification
- Occurs when full
- Feelings of guilt and shame

Physical Hunger

- Occurs gradually
- Open to options
- Feels as if it can wait
- Stop when full
- No feelings of guilt



Identify Eating Triggers

By identifying what triggers emotional eating, we can substitute more appropriate techniques to manage our emotional problems and take sugar out of the equation.

The HALT Method

- Are you **H**-ungry?
- Are you **A**-ngry?
- Are you **L**-onely?
- Are you **T**-ired?



- *Develop alternatives to eating:* when you start to reach for food in response to a trigger, try an enjoyable activity instead.
- *Keep a food diary* that records what and when you eat, as well as stressors, thoughts, or emotions you identify as you eat.

Dealing with Withdrawal

- Stay motivated.
- Prepare for cravings.
- Symptoms like headache, fatigue, and mood swings will be worse before better.
- After a few days you will be feeling better and notice beneficial changes.



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Tips on Stopping Emotional Eating & Handling Your Cravings

- Remove sugar from your home and workplace where possible.
- Be kind to yourself.
- Have natural and healthy sweet options available.
- Stay hydrated and eat a balanced diet focused on protein, fibre, and good fats.
- Practice mindful eating.
- Go slow and focus on long term wellness.



Break the bond between sugar and your emotions by managing what you are feeling in healthy ways, breaking the sugar habit, and making better choices.

Are You an Emotional Eater?

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| • Do you often eat regardless of physical hunger | YES | NO |
| • When you feel stressed/upset/overly happy/etc., do you turn to food for comfort or reward? | YES | NO |
| • Do you eat to feel better? | YES | NO |
| • Do you feel like you have no will-power or control when it comes to food? | YES | NO |
| • Do you feel like food is always there for comfort when other things or people aren't? | YES | NO |

Lunch and Learn Resources:

- <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/11-ways-to-stop-food-cravings#section8>
- <https://draxe.com/sugar-withdrawal/>
- <https://www.hhhealth.com/blog/2016/11/09/halt!-a-tool-to-curb-emotional-eating/>
- <https://examinedexistence.com/how-you-can-train-your-brain-to-create-new-habits/>
- <https://www.medicaldaily.com/how-does-sugar-affect-your-brain-turns-out-very-similar-way-drugs-and-alcohol-295034>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15987666>
- <https://happyfoodhealthylife.com/emotional-eater/>