

CAUSES, SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL OVEREATING

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Feeling intense hunger suddenly - A pang of true physical hunger comes on gradually because it's the result of an empty stomach. If you often feel an intense need to eat and it comes on suddenly, then it is likely an emotional need. Instead of reaching for snacks, grab a glass of water and find something to do.
- Reaching for junk - If you tend to grab ice cream, donuts, chips, or candy instead of making a balanced meal, then this indicates you're feeding an emotional hunger versus physical hunger.
- Sweeping emotions - If your urge to eat comes on the tail of uncomfortable emotions, then it's an emotional hunger.
- A lack of control - If you feel guilty after you eat or feel out of control while you eat, then these are both signs that it's an emotional eating problem.
 - You continue to eat even after you feel full.
 - You continue to feel hungry even though you couldn't possibly be.
 - You're not sure if you're hungry, but you eat anyway.
 - You often eat to the point of discomfort.
 - Once you finish eating, you realize you don't know how much you ate.
 - Once you finish eating, you realize you don't even know how it tasted.
 - You feel embarrassment, shame, or guilt when you finish eating.
 - You eat because you are tired, bored, excited, or lonely.
 - Your hunger often accompanies unpleasant emotions like anxiety, hurt, anger, or fear. Emotional hunger isn't related to your stomach, it starts in your mind.
 - You crave specific foods and nothing else will do.
 - You graze, snack, and continue to eat because nothing seems to hit the spot.
 - When you feel stressed, you eat.
 - When you're busy you subconsciously reach for food.
 - You often subconsciously reach for food when you're bored.
 - You eat as a reaction to emotions.
 - Food provides you with solace.
 - You struggle to lose weight.
 - You know that you're eating is out of control.
 - If you want to feel happy, you eat.
 - You eat because you feel happy.
 - You love everything about food, you enjoy eating and when you're not, you're thinking about it. You love food and you crave it.
 - When you talk about food you describe it using emotionally charged words like indulgent, sinful, tempting, or decadent.
 - You experience cravings, you suddenly get an urge to eat a certain food and have no idea why. It happens when you're not hungry and you can't shake it until you feed the craving.
 - Your eating habits change as a result of stress.
 - You use food as a reward.
 - You use food as a way to self-soothe.

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL EATING

Food as a reward. Food to relieve stress. Food as comfort. Eating behind emotions might make you feel better in the moment, but leads to feelings of guilt, shame and powerlessness afterwards. It does not fix the emotional problems you are experiencing but only adds more baggage to the core problem.

CAUSES & TRIGGERS

- Peer pressure
- Negative emotions
- Difficult events
- Stressful periods
- Stress in general
- Failure
- Mistakes
- Shame
- Guilt
- Anger
- Difficulty at work, school, or at home
- Exposure to abuse
- Exposure to trauma
- Exposure to crime
- Arguments
- Ill health, physically or mentally
- An emotional void
- A substitute for intimacy
- Punishment and self-sabotage
- Boredom

