



## Emotional Eating Rescue

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### *Establish “sane” eating patterns and habits*

- Identify the **times** when you are most likely to overeat by keeping monitoring sheets. Plan alternative that are incompatible with eating, such as going for a walk with a friend, studying at the library or doing a craft.
- Establish a meal schedule that provides adequate food. Eat three to six meals each day and never skip meals. This is the best defense against binge eating.
- Give yourself enough food at each meal. Get to know what a real meal looks like. Use a plate, set the table, sit down and relax (you deserve special times of the day).
- Establish a routine when you get home for the day. Plan things to do before you start dinner (e.g. set down, have a large glass of water and perhaps a vegetable or fruit snack to curb your appetite, read the paper, walk the dog, etc.)
- Do not eat during food preparation. It is easy to consume many calories while preparing dinner.
- Snacks are small meals. By all means eat them, but pay attention to what and how much you are eating.
- When you feel the urge to binge or feel out of control, try to identify what you are feeling and deal with that feeling. Try writing down your feelings, or talk to a friend, or go for a walk.

### More Help

- Use self talk. “Binging will not make it better. In fact, I will feel worse after I binge. What else can I do about how I feel? Coping with our feelings is hard, but it will get easier as you continue to practice.
- If you feel you are at risk of buying too much food, carry as little money as possible.
- Set limits on “trigger” foods. If you know you cannot resist chips, then don’t buy them. Have other foods on hand that are healthy but have the same characteristics (e.g., pretzels, air popped popcorn lightly spritzed with oil and seasonings, baked chips).
- Eat a variety of foods at each meal. If you try to eat only “light” or “diet” foods, chances are you will be missing out on some protein and/or fat, both of which increase satiety and keep you feeling satisfied.

- Eat foods that require the use of utensils rather than eating finger foods. This will slow eating time and increase meal satiety.
- Include generous sources of carbohydrate at each meal for energy.
- Use foods that are naturally divided into portions, such as one potato, and an 8-oz container of yogurt or ice cream or pre cut steaks or chicken pieces, or light frozen TV dinners. This helps prevent overeating from having seconds and thirds of everything.
- At each meal include low calorie items so that you can eat as much of them as you want. Include green salads, vegetables, broth based soups or fruits.
- If you are not sure how to plan a meal for your self, ask yourself “What would I feed my friend for lunch?”
- Use a food diary. Record what you eat and when you eat, and how much you eat. Do not use this as a guilt tool. It is simply the easiest way to identify problem times, foods, or portions.
- Keep in mind that too much restriction, as well as eating to excess, can be a serious problem. Shoot for the middle ground and some moderation when making food choices.

#### If you did binge

- Use self-talk. “Well, I have started a binge, but that does not mean I can’t stop.” “If I didn’t have food right now, what would I really want?”
- Avoid negative self statements such as:
  - “My binge this afternoon has ruined everything, now I have to start over.”
  - “I am totally out of control and will never be able to do this.”
  - “I am such a failure!”
  - “Since I lost control, the rest of the day is ruined, so I might as well go for it and eat anything I want! I’ll start again tomorrow.”
  - “Because I couldn’t help myself from bingeing today, I will never be able to stop.”

If you use these kind of statements frequently, you may want to get help to change the way you talk to yourself.

- Go back and review your feelings. Eat regular meals in spite of the binge and get right back on track with your healthy eating plan.