

Opinion: Don't eat your heart out

Posted by [Jacqui Atkielski](#) On 08/19/2016

HOLLYWOOD, Md. — Who doesn't snack mindlessly while watching television, or down a pint of Ben and Jerry's after breaking up or being dumped?

I never realized I would eat when I was stressed out until after I graduated from college. Not only did I earn a degree, but I also earned over 30 pounds due to snacking, and an unhealthy diet consisting of Taco Bell and bar food.

Sometimes we eat because we are anxious, upset, happy or bored, [according to this website](#).

If you munch due to a feeling instead of an actual hunger, it's called emotional eating. When we eat our hearts out instead of addressing our emotional issues, we also consume large portions of comfort foods high in calories, fats and sugars.

Stress and other emotions are guaranteed to happen throughout life. But using food to suppress those emotions rarely works, because the feelings will come back. Not only did you not address your emotions, you also now feel guilty for picking the wrong foods to snack on.

If you're trying to slim down or maintain a healthier lifestyle, emotional eating will sidetrack your progress or completely derail your plans for a healthier you. There are several things to keep in mind when you want to reach for the chips and cookies during an emotional point in your day.

Try to be aware of your feelings and check in emotionally when you start to crave those salty or sweet treats. Are you really hungry, or just feeding the boredom beast?

Keep a food journal and record side notes about your feelings at the time. Being able to keep track of your eating habits and your emotions will help you make better food choices when you're stressed out. You might discover food allergies or what emotions lead to which cravings over time.

Limit the temptation to snack on processed foods by not purchasing them. If this isn't an option, try to purchase snacks that come in portion sizes so you can satisfy your craving without overindulging.

When the cravings strike, set a timer for 10 minutes and walk away. Keep your mind off of it with other activities. When the timer sounds, if you're still craving the food, and you're actually hungry, eat fruit or smaller portions. If you're not actually hungry but are craving something unhealthy due to your moods, find something else to do until the craving subsides.

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