



Weight Management

fact sheet

LISTENING TO YOUR BODY

Getting tuned in to your body's needs is an important part of learning to manage your eating behaviors.

Many people report that they have trouble telling when they are physically hungry and when they have had enough to eat.

However, with practice, our participants find they can learn to pick up their internal cues. Here are some strategies that may be helpful:

DEVELOP A REGULAR PATTERN OF MEALS AND SNACKS.

- Your body will begin to adapt, making it easier for you to pick up your signals.
- In general, you can expect to be hungry about 4-6 hours after a healthy meal - you can use this as a gauge to help you learn more about your hunger cues.

LEARN TO PAUSE BEFORE EATING, TAKING A FEW SECONDS TO CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF?

- "Am I hungry?" "Or thirsty?"
- "Am I thinking of eating just because the food is there", "or is being offered?"
- "Am I restless?" "Looking for a break?"
- "Am I upset?" "Angry?" "Anxious?"
- "Am I craving something specific?"

If we are eating regular, adequate, balanced meals, there can be many hours of the day when our bodies are not physically hungry. However, unless we are "stuffed", we could probably eat more. The opportunities to do so are frequent.

Eating regularly, avoiding getting too hungry or too full, slowing things down, taking time to learning to listen to your body are first steps to cope with unwanted urges to eat.

HERE IS AN EXERCISE TO TRY TO IMPROVE YOUR SENSITIVITY TO FULLNESS:

- Find a quiet, pleasant place to eat.
- Portion out a balanced meal, perhaps taking a little time to make it look nice.
- Eat slowly - taking about 20-30 minutes to finish your meal
- Pause after finishing your meal, then stop and take a break, wait another 20-30 minutes - for the fullness signals to reach your brain - you may want to distract yourself, perhaps cleaning up, or leaving the dining area and doing something else.
- After about 30 minutes, check in with yourself and evaluate your sense of satisfaction/fullness
 - ▶ On a scale of 1-5, with 3 being satisfied or OK, 1 being "still hungry" and 5 being "too full", how are you doing?

KEEP PRACTICING: Don't get too discouraged if you find yourself eating, despite knowing that you are not really hungry - it takes time to develop new patterns - awareness is a first step.