

OVERCOMING FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE OUR FOOD CHOICES



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Every day we are overwhelmed with eating “cues” – triggers that influence what we eat and how much we eat. There are many reasons why we eat that have nothing to do with satisfying our physiological needs, including social, external, and internal cues.

Once you become aware of your personal food triggers, you can begin to manage these cues and eventually overcome them.

Social Cues:

When our social environment triggers us to behave in a certain way.

External Cues:

Environmental stimulants which encourage you to eat.

Internal Cues:

Patterns of thought, emotion, or underlying psychological issues that motivate you to act on an impulse.

Examples: Are you triggered to eat...

- Around certain family members or friends
- At parties or special occasions
- When you are conducting business over a meal
- When being urged to eat by a food pusher

- At the sight or smell of food
- By a specific foods
- At particular places
- While engaged in specific activities
- At certain times of the day

- When you are feeling sad or upset
- When you are tired
- When you are experiencing physical discomfort
- After an argument

Managing Your Eating Triggers

Have a plan

If you can't avoid socializing, you will need to have a plan to successfully stay on track.

Ex.

- *Look at the menu before you arrive at a restaurant*
- *Get up and take a break in the middle of your meal if you are tempted to overeat.*

Practice responding to offers of unhealthy food

Remember: “No thank you” is a complete sentence!

You may have to say “no thank you” more than once to get your message across. If a food pusher harasses you and asks why, all you need to say is, “I’m taking more control over what I eat.” You are in control!

Break the Distracted Eating Behavior Pattern

If you are eating while watching television or while scrolling on your computer or smartphone, you are most likely paying more attention to what is happening on the screen than what you are putting into your mouth. This is called mindless eating.

Mindless eating not only makes food less satisfying, but it also leads to overeating.

Use the “Out of Sight, Out of Mind” Strategy

Sometimes the old adage, “out of sight, out of mind,” can be extremely useful for you to keep in mind! Change your environment based on what you’ve recognized about your habits.

Be Aware

Keep a journal of your emotions in order to become self-aware regarding your eating patterns. For instance, do you find yourself habitually reaching for certain foods when you are mad, sad, or even happy?

Develop positive self-talk

Our thoughts directly affect our behaviors. Therefore, it is necessary to think positively about your weight loss journey. Write down your weight loss goals and desires and refer to them often to help you stay focused on what you want.

When self-defeating thoughts creep into your mind, refer to your list of goals and remind yourself that you are capable of success.

For more information from Dr. Kim on this topic & more,
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