

PART 6

Break Through Emotional Eating

Hunger is not always a drive to fulfill a physical need. Sometimes, eating is due to stress, anxiety, or celebration. Emotions can be triggers for overeating or making less healthy choices. This section will help you:

1. Determine if your hunger is physical or emotional.
2. Identify and cope with emotions that prompt you to eat when you are not hungry.
3. Be mindful in daily life.
4. Give you more tools for managing stress.

Physical vs. Emotional Hunger

Eat when you are physically hungry. Know the difference between physical and emotional hunger.

Physical Hunger	Emotional Hunger
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your stomach feels empty.• Comes on gradually and can be postponed.• You feel sluggish and need energy.• You haven't eaten for several hours.• You are hungry enough to eat anything.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You have a psychological desire to eat.• Comes on suddenly and feels urgent.• You only want certain foods.• You eat something because it looks or smells good, even though your hunger is satisfied.• You eat as a response to boredom, not the physical need to eat.

Q: Is my hunger physical or emotional?

A: Yes, I am physically hungry

Ways to Manage Hunger

- Eat meals at regular times and intervals every day.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat snacks that are high in fiber and/or protein:
 - Raw and cooked veggies
 - A piece of fruit
 - Unbuttered popcorn
 - Trail mix with nuts, seeds and dried fruit
- Drink water throughout the day.

A: No, I am emotionally hungry

Ways to Manage a Craving

- Do an activity that takes your mind off of food. Walk to another room.
- Go for a walk or do your favorite exercise.
- Do a burst of exercise, like 10 jumping jacks, squats, or lunges.
- Take 10 deep breaths as you stretch.
- Drink a glass of water.
- Wait 10 minutes. Re-evaluate the hunger.
- Have a small amount of the specific food you are craving. If you are worried you can't control your portion, skip this tip.
- Use the tips in this section for managing the emotion.

Self-Discovery: Hunger

List the last meal or snack you ate. Write down everything you ate or drank.

Was this a planned meal or snack? YES NO

If no, what triggered you to have this meal or snack?

How many hours had it been since you last ate?

Did your meal or snack satisfy your hunger? YES NO

Do you think this was physical or emotional hunger?

List a situation that is an emotional eating trigger for you (e.g., boredom while watching TV or stress at work). Plan a response in the second column.

Trigger	Planned Response

Feeling Full

Learn to better evaluate your fullness. It can take twenty minutes to start feeling physically full.

1. Be satisfied in other ways. Enjoy the taste of food, the people you are with, or the place you are eating.
2. Express gratitude for your food. This includes who prepared the food (it may be you!) and where it comes from.
3. Drink a glass of water throughout the meal. This will help with digestion and feeling full.
4. Make half your plate vegetables. It will take longer to eat these nutrient-dense foods.
5. Keep consistent “food rules” like sitting at the table and drinking a glass of water with each meal or snack. This can be a built in “speed bump” for overeating. If you don’t want to sit at the table or drink water, you may not be physically hungry and emotional hunger is your trigger.
6. When tracking your intake, also track your hunger-fullness using the scale to the right. Try to eat in the gray area (range 4-7). Avoid being too hungry or too full.
7. Slow down. If you can, try to increase the time it takes you to finish your meal by 50%. If you currently finish dinner in 10 minutes, set a timer to stretch the meal out by 5 minutes—or longer!

The Hunger-Fullness Scale	
0	Empty
1	Ravenous
2	Over-hungry
3	Hunger pangs
4	Hunger awakens
5	Neutral
6	Just satisfied
7	Completely satisfied
8	Full
9	Stuffed
10	Sick

Identify Emotions that Prompt You to Eat

Indicate how often the following scenarios apply to you.

	Never	Less than half the time	More than half the time	Every time
When I'm angry or upset, I think, "I don't care what I eat or how much I eat."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I see something tasty, I eat it but regret it later. I find myself saying, "Why did I just do that? I didn't really want it."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I have a craving for something, it is very difficult for me not to satisfy it right away. I may feel frustrated until I have it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I'm stressed, I tell myself, "I can take a break from eating healthy so I can focus on the stressful things. I will get back on track later."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I am eating with my friends or family, I can't seem to stick to my healthy plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Once I start eating something I really like, I have a hard time stopping, even when I want to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find myself saying, "Oh, what the heck, I blew it anyway. I might as well eat whatever I want."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total				

Add up the number of boxes you checked in the right two columns.

Total

- 0 – 1 Emotional eating may not be a big problem for you, but you can still benefit from learning healthy ways to manage emotions.
- 2 – 4 Emotional eating is affecting some of your common eating behaviors. Learn how to cope with emotions in healthy ways on the following pages.
- 5 or more Emotional eating is affecting many of your common eating behaviors. Learn how to cope with emotions in healthy ways on the following pages.

Recognize When Something is Bothering You

Identify what forces are at play. These may be positive or negative emotions that are pushing you to do something you don't need or want to do.

Check (✓) any of the following emotions that trigger less healthy eating.

- Anger Anxiety Boredom Depression
- Frustration Insecurity Stress Celebration

Write other feelings you have that trigger feelings of hunger:

- Accept that you are having these feelings. Rather than trying to change how you feel, focus on changing your response to these feelings.
- Keep a journal to determine what triggers lead you to emotional eating.

For negative emotions, did eating food solve the situation? Chances are it did not. Food does not solve emotional problems. It never has and it never will. Food simply keeps you from dealing with the issue at hand. When the last bite is eaten, the problem is still there.

Positive emotions, like joy and comradery, may cause you to overeat. Think of a time when you were celebrating and over-ate.

Avoid feeling guilty if you have overeaten or chosen less healthy foods. The feeling of guilt can make digestion difficult or lead to more overeating.

Help! I Just Ate Half a Cake!

Recover from Overeating

1. Be kind to yourself. Practice self-care right away, both in what you say to yourself and what you do.

Say something kind to yourself now. Write it down here:

2. Drink water and get enough sleep. This supports your kidneys and liver, two organs in your body that help keep digestion going smoothly and filter out toxins.
3. Get up and move. Perhaps go for a slow walk today. Then, get your heart pumping more tomorrow with a faster walk or an exercise class.
4. Start the next day with a healthy breakfast. Get your metabolism revved and running early. This will help you use the extra energy you consumed the day before. Choose a food high in fiber for breakfast. This will help your body clear your digestive system of waste, especially from a large meal high in fatty and salty foods. Choose plant-based sources of protein to give your body extra fiber.
5. Continue to follow your healthy eating plan. Avoid the “I blew it” approach that can cause one “off” meal or snack to spiral out of control.
6. Plan for the future. Without a plan, this is likely to happen again.
 - Am I eating enough? Do I feel like I’m starving all the time?
 - Am I getting enough from each food group? Your body may need a nutrient that it isn’t getting.
 - Am I being too tough on myself? Making a lot of changes at once can be hard to stick with. Create a realistic plan for you to make changes gradually. Allow yourself some treats.
 - Learn healthy ways to cope with emotions in this section.

Practice Relaxation Techniques

Use relaxation techniques to manage emotional eating triggers.

Learn These Four Skills to Relax

1. Relaxation Reflex: Get rid of muscle tension.
2. Mindfulness: Be fully present in the moment.
3. Deep Breathing: Feel relaxed by breathing in more oxygen.

Plan Relaxation Time

Plan 15 minutes during the day to intentionally relax. You can also do relaxation exercises as needed throughout the day. Practice these techniques before eating or to cope with an emotion that is triggering you to eat. Relaxation techniques can help reduce stress-related health problems, such as high blood pressure, headaches, and pain. These tools also help you to have greater mental and physical control and improve your response to negative emotions.



How the mind can control the body:

- It can slow brain wave patterns.
- It can reduce heart and breathing rates.
- It can increase blood flow to the limbs.
- It can relax muscles.

Relaxation Reflex

This skill relaxes four basic muscle groups. Tightening and relaxing these muscles produces a soothing effect that helps you relax. Take slow, deep breaths, drop your head, and place your shoulders forward to add to the effect.



Practice every day for about 5 to 10 minutes. Divide the body into 4 muscle groups. Tense each group for 5 seconds, then release.

1. **Arms and Hands** – Lift your arms, bending them at your wrists and elbows. Make fists and tighten your upper arms.
2. **Face and Neck** – Squinch your eyes, nose, cheeks, and brow. Stretch your mouth and grit your teeth. Point your chin down toward your chest.
3. **Middle Torso** – Push your shoulders back. Tighten your stomach and the middle of your back.
4. **Legs and Feet** – Lift your legs off the floor and hold them straight out. Point your toes toward your face. Tighten your thighs.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness means you are fully aware of all aspects of what you are sensing in the current moment. Practice mindfulness while you listen to music, walk, run, garden, or eat.

- Focus on current thoughts without judging them.
- Put past thoughts and what the future has in store out of your mind.

Mindfulness can lower inflammation in the body. It can also activate areas in the brain that give you feelings of calmness.

Mindfulness Exercise

- Set aside five (or more) minutes. Find a place with no distractions. Get comfortable.
- Focus on your breathing or anything in the present, such as the sounds you hear or an object in your sight.
- As thoughts pop up in your mind, let them go without judging them. Return your focus to what you see, hear, and feel.

Mindful Eating

- Have a space for eating that is separate from where you do other tasks.
- Calm yourself first. Use other relaxation techniques to help you focus on the present.
- When you are eating, just eat. Avoid multi-tasking. Distractions like watching TV or looking at your phone take away from being mindful.
- Savor your food and the act of eating it. Embrace all of the senses—touch, smell, sight, taste, and sound.
- Avoid judging yourself while you eat. Once you have chosen what to eat, enjoy it fully.

Practice Mindfulness with an Orange

Peeling an orange or other fragrant fruit can help you practice focusing on the moment. Press your nail into the thick skin to break through. Breathe in the citrus scent as you slowly take pieces off the fruit. Bite into a slice of the orange. Notice the taste on your tongue and the feel of the juices.

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Deep Breathing

An increased amount of oxygen allows your heart rate to slow down. This produces a calming effect.

1. Sit in a chair, arms at your sides, with your legs uncrossed. Or, lie down on a comfortable surface, like a bed or couch.
2. If you are able, close your eyes. Do not close your eyes while driving or operating machinery.
3. Note any tension in your muscles.
4. Slowly inhale through your nose, expanding your abdomen first. Fill your lungs next.
5. Hold your breath for 2 to 4 seconds.
6. Slowly exhale.
7. Repeat this exercise for several minutes.

Your chest should feel less constricted. You should feel less stress and tension physically and mentally. Problems haven't gone away, but you may feel more ready to tackle them or cope with a negative emotion.

Try this now. How do you feel afterward?

Practice Deep Breathing: Take a Rest from Your Emotions

Detach yourself from your thoughts and emotions. Imagine sitting on a hill and viewing your thoughts and feelings at the bottom of the hill. Observe your thoughts as they pass by. Or, you can stop and think about them. Tell yourself: "I have control over when and how I think about a situation."

Put your emotional reactions to a situation or issue to rest for awhile. This helps your mind use logical thinking.

Address Anger

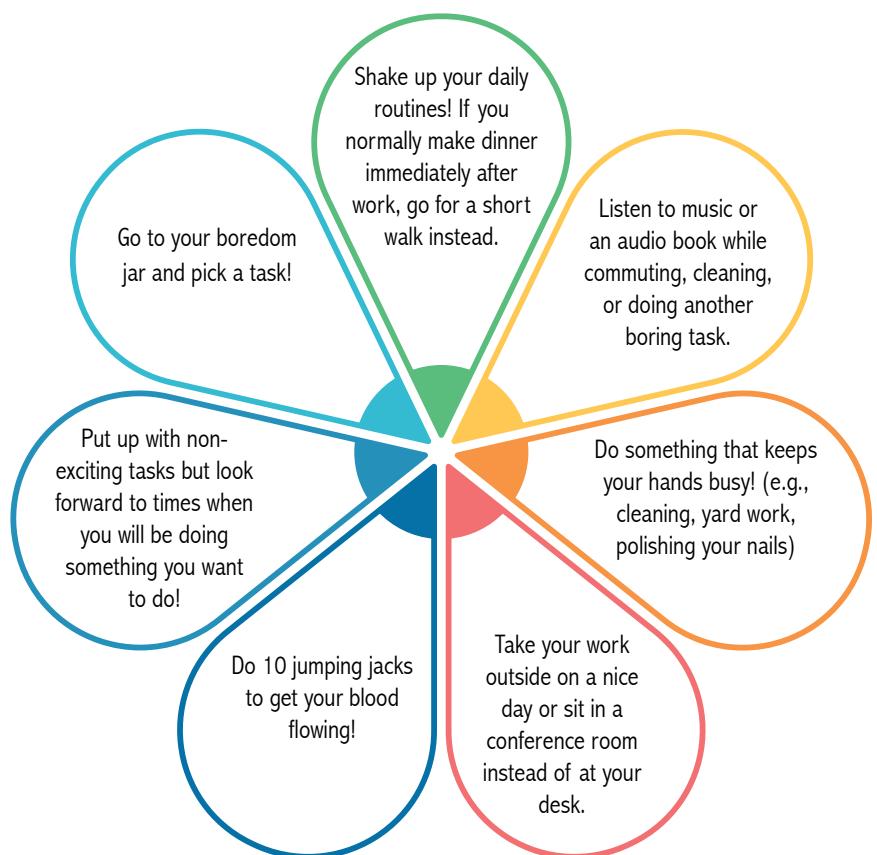
Place a check (✓) next to the items you do now. If you do not do these items already, write your name in the second box. Commit to try this strategy the next time you are angry.

List additional ways you can deal with anger, without eating, in the blank space at the bottom of this page.

Strategy	I do this now!	I will try this!
Count to ten at the first twinge of anger. Then count back down to zero.		
Take three or four slow, deep breaths. Picture the angry impulse passing you by.		
Take a walk until you can calm down. Or, do some other form of exercise. If you cannot exercise right away, plan to do it as soon as possible. Look forward to this opportunity to blow off some steam.		
If someone says or does something that bothers you, discuss it calmly or wait until you feel you can discuss it calmly. Use assertive communication tools.		
Distract yourself. Do a task that has to get done today or in the near future.		
Repeat to yourself or out loud, "I'm angry because: _____" List what is making you angry. Ask yourself, "Are these rational thoughts?"		
Listen to music. Make a playlist of songs you know help to calm you down. Or, turn to a radio station that plays soothing music or music you can sing to.		
Help someone in need.		

Address Boredom

Being bored means being tired of doing the same thing over and over again. It may also mean having nothing to do or nothing that seems interesting to do. Write these ideas on sticky notes. Post reminders in places you often get bored.



Create a Boredom Jar

Write down the things you want to do and will feel proud of doing when you complete them. These activities can be big or small, but try to write down at least a dozen activities. Write down some activities that take a short amount of time and some activities that take longer. Write these down on individual slips of paper and put them in a jar. When you feel boredom could lead to an unhealthy food choice, pick an activity from your jar. Do the activity written on the slip. Write down things you like to do:

Short Activities (10-30 minutes)	Longer Activities (30+ minutes)
1. Brainstorming session (15-20 minutes)	1. Deep Dive into a specific topic (30-45 minutes)
2. Group discussion (10-15 minutes)	2. Case study analysis (45-60 minutes)
3. Role-playing (15-20 minutes)	3. Project planning (60-90 minutes)
4. Brainwriting (10-15 minutes)	4. Team building exercises (60-90 minutes)
5. Storytelling (10-15 minutes)	5. Problem-solving (90-120 minutes)
6. Brainstorming session (15-20 minutes)	6. Deep Dive into a specific topic (30-45 minutes)
7. Group discussion (10-15 minutes)	7. Case study analysis (45-60 minutes)
8. Role-playing (15-20 minutes)	8. Project planning (60-90 minutes)
9. Brainwriting (10-15 minutes)	9. Team building exercises (60-90 minutes)
10. Storytelling (10-15 minutes)	10. Problem-solving (90-120 minutes)

Seek Downtime Daily

Downtime is idle time between activities. Examples are the moments you have waiting at a red light, the time spent riding in an elevator, or the extra time you have during a lunch break.

Idle time allows your brain to rest, process, and store information (how you learn and form memories). If you've ever had a great idea come to you in the shower, you know how creative your mind is during this time. Appreciate downtime to reduce feelings of boredom.

Often, multi-tasking or a feeling that you must always be doing something steals this time away. The resulting "addiction to activity" does not let your mind rest during the day. The result can be a feeling of being busy all the time. You may feel like you need "time to think." If you go all day without downtime, it can be harder to quiet your mind at night and go to sleep.

Practice letting your mind rest every day. If you are used to filling your time with multiple tasks at once, the following exercise may be eye-opening!

Try This: Sit in a room or outside for 15 minutes and do nothing. Don't look at your phone or seek any other distractions. Let thoughts enter your mind.

Reflect: How did you feel at the end of 15 minutes?

Ways to Include Downtime Daily

- Turn off notifications on your phone. Set aside time for social media during the day—and avoid it at other times.
- Listen to music instead of the news or talk radio while driving. Or, sit in silence and let your mind wander.
- Set an alarm on your phone to remind you to take at least five minutes of "blank space" time during your day.

Address Depression

Signs & Symptoms

- Feeling sad, hopeless, helpless, and/or worthless
- Fatigue
- Loss of interest in daily activities, including sex
- Change in eating and sleeping patterns
- Anger, anxiety, or irritability
- Having a hard time concentrating or making decisions
- Thoughts of suicide or death

Strategy	I do this now!	I will try this!
Accept thoughts as they are. Focus on your response, rather than trying to shoo away the emotion.		
Be with and call relatives and friends who lift your morale and make you laugh.		
Do something to help someone else.		
Keep up with your regular exercise.		
Do something different. Walk or drive to someplace new.		
Challenge yourself with a new project. It doesn't have to be difficult, but it should be enjoyable.		
Watch a funny TV show or movie.		
Reflect on your expectations and make adjustments – it takes a long time to change habits and feel the new habits are "normal."		
Change your clothes. Take a shower. Do small self-care activities.		

If you feel depressed for two weeks or longer, see a doctor.

For a screening test for depression, contact:

Mental Health America

800-969-6642 • www.mentalhealthamerica.net

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Address Anxiety

Anxiety is a feeling of dread, fear, or distress over a real or imagined threat to your mental or physical well-being. Avoid eating as a way to cope with anxiety. Try the strategies listed below.

Strategy	I do this now!	I will try this!
Take a long, warm bath or shower. Or, go for a swim.		
Focus on relaxing through exercise, soothing music, helping others, etc.		
Connect with people. Visit or call someone who will listen to you and support you.		
Drink a warm cup of decaf coffee or tea – avoid caffeine, which can make anxiety worse.		
Practice mindfulness and other relaxation techniques.		

Wash, Peel & Chop Away Anxiety

Get your meal prep done and work away anxious feelings at the same time! Gently wash fruits and vegetables. Chop foods slowly and evenly. Prepare all of the ingredients for a meal neatly before starting to cook.

Take your time to cook. Clean as you go, keeping your space tidy. Slowly wash and dry dishes by hand. Take breaks if you need to.

Other Causes of Anxiety

Anxiety could be a symptom of low blood sugar. Other symptoms of low blood sugar include shakiness, feeling faint, headache, rapid heartbeat, and sweating. In this case, you will need to have something to drink or eat, such as orange juice, a piece of hard candy, or crackers. Anxiety can also be a symptom of an anxiety disorder or other health condition. Check with your doctor if the symptoms above happen often.

Take a Step Back

Write down what you are anxious about. Step back and look at your concern from an outsider's point of view. Imagine how others might handle these issues. You can also use this technique to look at your job or family duties. Ask yourself these questions:

What can I expect of myself in this situation?

Are my expectations realistic, given my abilities, strengths, and weaknesses?

What do others expect of me?

What ideas would others have for me? When you imagine how someone else might respond to a situation, you may come up with helpful ideas!

If you struggle to answer these questions, wait at least an hour or sleep on it. When you come back to this worry, you may see things in a different way and feel more ready to address the issue.

Plan Problem-Solving

Your worries and concerns take up time in your day. Many issues cannot simply be ignored or brushed aside. To avoid letting these thoughts trigger unhealthy eating habits, plan time to address them.

Steps to Address Your Worries

1. Write a worry at the top of a piece of paper.
2. Divide the paper into three columns:
 - a. What I can't do. Recognize what is out of your control.
 - b. What I can do. List possible actions that are within your control.
Write things you know how to do and that are realistic actions for you to take.
 - c. What I will do. Decide which action you are ready to take first. This action may not solve every part of the problem, but is a small step toward a solution. Write when you will do this.

My worry:

What I can't do:	What I can do:	What I will do and when:

Mind Dump

Use this tool when you feel you have too many thoughts to juggle and aren't sure where to start. Use small pieces of paper or index cards to "mind dump" thoughts that come to mind. Write down concerns, ideas, and things you need to remember. Pull one card and use the steps above to address this worry. Don't pull another card until you are satisfied with your plan to deal with the first worry.

Address Insecurity

Focus on things that you can do well.

List at least 5 things in your life that you are proud of.

Examples include raising a family, earning a degree, getting promoted at work, increasing your bowling average, and having a garden!

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

How can you improve these skills further? Set realistic goals to do this! Spend time with people who make you feel loved and secure. Build a list of places you can go where you feel comfortable.

Spend Time with Animals

Spend time with a pet. Volunteer at a shelter. Spend time with a friend or family member's pet. Go to a pet store, or look at adopting a rescue animal. Spending time with a pet can:

- Decrease production of cortisol, a stress hormone that can put you on edge and make you ill over time.
- Increase serotonin, which helps you feel relaxed and happy.
- Help you feel secure. Pets, especially dogs, can love unconditionally and may sense when you need extra support. Some pets are trained to help you manage certain emotions, like anxiety.



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Stand Tall

Change your posture, whether you are sitting or standing. Changing your posture can help you change your point of view.



Power Stance: Plant your feet firmly, shoulder-width apart. Take a deep breath and pull your shoulders back, stretching your upper chest forward. Place your hands on your hips.

This can help you feel respected and powerful. Appreciate your own power and what you are capable of doing. Feel respect for yourself.

Stand or sit in this pose for a few minutes before a challenge, such as an emotional conversation or job interview. Use this tool for addressing your inner critic or self-defeating thoughts.

Try this now. How do you feel?

Manage Stress

Use the tools presented earlier in this guide to manage stress.

- Be physically active.
- Dispute unhelpful thoughts.
- Create a healthy food environment. When stressed, it may be tough to avoid unhealthy food options that are within arm's reach.
- Listen to music. Or, learn an instrument, write music or lyrics, or sing. These can all help you release tension.

Make a Laugh Manual

Create a notebook with funny cartoons, jokes, pictures, and other things that make you laugh. Cut and paste funny things from newspapers or magazines. Print funny things from the internet. Glue them to the pages in your notebook.

Look at your notebook when you need a tickle! Laughter is good medicine. Laughter:

- Releases endorphins. This helps you feel good and can relieve pain.
- Boosts your immune system, helping you fight infection and resist disease.
- Distracts you from a stressor. When you look at the stressor again, you may view it in a different way and be better prepared to tackle it.

A Sense of Awe

Awe is that feeling you get when you look at a beautiful landscape or colorful fireworks display. Feelings of awe can boost your problem-solving abilities and make you a more critical thinker.

Spend time in nature to get a regular dose of “awe” and a mental boost!

- Go to a park or walk along a trail.
- Sit outside to eat lunch.
- Look at nature photography or landscapes.
- Visit a lake, river, or other body of water.

Add a Stress-Busting Food to Your Day

What you eat may impact your mood. Make sure you are eating a balanced diet with nutrient-dense foods. B vitamins and magnesium can be helpful for managing anxiety and boosting your mood. Avoid foods and drinks high in sugar that can cause mood swings and fatigue.

B Vitamins

B vitamins can stimulate the brain's production of serotonin. This helps you relax and feel good.

Good Sources of B Vitamins

- Animal products: fish, poultry, meat, eggs, or dairy
- Beans and lentils
- Fruits and vegetables, especially leafy greens, papayas, oranges, and cantaloupe
- Fortified breakfast cereals and enriched soy or rice milk
- Nuts, such as almonds, pistachios, and walnuts

Magnesium

Magnesium has a calming effect on the brain. It can help relax muscles, blood vessels, and the gastrointestinal tract. Magnesium can also boost serotonin and reduce mood swings.

Good Sources of Magnesium:

- Dark leafy greens
- Nuts, seeds, and dried fruit
- Beans and lentils
- Whole grains
- Avocados and bananas
- Dark chocolate
- Yogurt
- Fish

Tips for Healthy Celebration

Happy times may also be triggers for overeating or making less healthy food choices. Holidays and other special occasions may also make it harder to fit in physical activity.

Put a check (✓) in the boxes next to items that trip you up during a celebration:

- Drinks: soda, alcoholic beverages
- Foods: desserts, large helpings of "comfort foods"
- Gifts of candy, cookies, etc.
- Too many things to do and less time to prepare healthy meals
- Workplace parties and cookie exchanges
- More travel or a change of routine
- Events centered around large meals, or appetizers
- All-you-can-eat buffets on cruise ships or at resorts

Approaches to Celebration

There are many ways you can approach a celebration.

1. *Make choices that fit with your healthy eating goals.* Choose this option most of the time.
2. *Make mostly healthy choices, but choose small treat foods.* Choose small portions of these treats and eat them mindfully.
3. *Eat without restriction.* Eat and drink what you would like without feeling guilty for choosing less healthy foods. Choose this option rarely and plan to make healthy choices the next day.

If you have been making healthy choices for a while, you may notice your body's negative response to certain unhealthy foods. Foods high in saturated fat seem to sit in your stomach longer and make you feel uncomfortable. Meals low in fiber may leave you constipated. Artificial sugars may give you a headache. Pay attention to this difference. It can help you choose less of these foods in the future.

Relieve the Pressure

Avoiding all holiday food challenges is nearly impossible. Adjust your goals and your action plan for success during this time. Your goal may be to “maintain, don’t gain” during a holiday season.

Celebration days throughout the year are likely a small fraction of your overall year. Of course, stretching celebration days into weeks and months as a “holiday season” can pose challenges to your healthy goals. Even during traditional “holiday seasons,” stick with your healthy habits on nearly all days.

Healthy Holiday Strategies:	I do this now!	I will try this!
Have a healthy snack (fiber-rich carbohydrate + protein & a healthy fat) before going to the event.		
Keep a drink in your hand (choose water most of the time) and sip throughout the event.		
Avoid tables with appetizers and food. Talk with others away from where snacks are served.		
Prioritize exercise. This will help you manage stress and keep your metabolism running hot.		
Focus on people, not food. Visit friends and relatives. Take non-food gifts, such as flowers.		
Modify meals to include less sugar, saturated fat, and sodium.		
Create new traditions that are not planned around food. Do volunteer work or plan a hike/outdoor adventure with friends and family.		
Use stress management tools in this guide.		
Get enough quality sleep.		

Review and Prepare

This section built on the tools you have been learning throughout this guide to manage emotional eating triggers. Stress, anxiety, boredom, and celebration can all trigger unhealthy eating behaviors. Answer the questions below.

How do you know when you are physically hungry?

What is the first thing you do when you realize your hunger is emotional?

**List relaxation strategies you have practiced this week.
If you haven't practiced any, pick one and do it now.**

How has addressing, rather than brushing aside, emotions helped you this week?

The next section will help you maintain weight loss, overcome plateaus, and connect to weight management in long-lasting and meaningful ways.