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Diabetes NSW Member Forum

Nutrition: Back to Basics

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Food has become really confusing!

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My relationship with food

- Punished myself for my ‘imperfect’ body.
- Feelings of deprivation and restriction.
- Adopted an all-or-nothing mentality.
- Resented healthy eating and exercise.
- Felt like I had received a life sentence.
Dieting doesn’t work

• Maintaining weight loss from a diet is incredibly hard.
• Dieting changes you physically.
• Diets affect you emotionally.
• Dieting has a 95% failure rate.
• Majority of people put back on the weight they lost after two years.
Dieting doesn’t work

• Instead of blaming the diet, you most likely blame yourself or ‘poor willpower’.
• Life and existing (!) makes sticking to a diet near impossible.
• Diets set you up for failure.
No one size fits all

• Everyone has an opinion on what you should be eating.
• Nutrition is complex because there’s no one-size-fits-all diet.
• There is no one perfect way of eating will work for you all the time. You need to adapt and change with your body over time.
No one size fits all

- Your body is highly intelligent and sophisticated.
- Bloating, exhaustion, hunger, and weight gain can be signs that something you are eating or how you are eating it isn’t working for you.
- You are the expert on your body.
- Learn to listen to your body and figure out what works for you.
Emotional + Comfort Eating

• Stress, anxiety and emotions can make healthy eating more challenging.
• Emotional eating is using food to make yourself feel better.
• We don’t always eat to satisfy hunger.
• We turn to food for comfort, stress or boredom relief, or as a reward.

“STRESSED” is “DESSERTS” spelled backwards

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Emotional + Comfort Eating

• Emotional eating doesn’t fix emotional problems.
• Emotional hunger can’t be filled by food.
• Overeating and binge eating is not normal or something you need to live with.
Are you an emotional eater?

- Do you eat more when you’re feeling stressed?
- Do you eat when you’re not hungry or when you’re full?
- Do you eat to feel better (to calm and soothe yourself when you’re sad, mad, bored, anxious, etc.)?
- Do you reward yourself with food?
- Do you regularly eat until you’ve stuffed yourself?
- Does food make you feel safe? Do you feel like food is a friend?
- Do you feel powerless or out of control around food?
## Emotional + comfort eating

**Emotional hunger vs. Physical hunger**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional hunger comes on suddenly.</th>
<th>Physical hunger comes on gradually.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional hunger feels like it needs to be satisfied instantly.</td>
<td>Physical hunger can wait.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional hunger craves specific comfort foods.</td>
<td>Physical hunger is open to options—lots of things sound good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional hunger isn't satisfied with a full stomach.</td>
<td>Physical hunger stops when you're full.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional eating triggers feelings of guilt, powerlessness, and shame.</td>
<td>Eating to satisfy physical hunger doesn't make you feel bad about yourself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
End Emotional Eating

Steps to overcome emotional and comfort eating:
1. Acknowledge that you use food to manage your emotions
2. Identify your triggers and make a change
3. Do not diet or deprive yourself
4. Change your food language
5. Listen to your body
6. Become more mindful
Mindful eating

• Mindful eating is the art of eating with respect for your body and using all of your senses to their fullest to get the most from the experience.
• Key strategy to building a positive relationship with food by breaking free from ‘food rules’.
• Mindful eating is a simple-to-learn and implement.
• **Mindful eating is not a diet.**
• Key principles of mindful eating include:
  – Slowing down
  – Acknowledging your bodies response to food
  – Using all of your senses

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Mindful Eating Exercise

How long does it take you to mindfully eat 1 sultana?

• Hold
• See
• Touch
• Smell
• Place
• Taste
• Swallow
• Follow

Disclaimer: You do not need to eat the sultana if you do not want to or if you have a personal reaction to fructose or preservatives.

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Good VS Bad Food

• Taking foods off limits will make you crave them more.
• Labelling food as good or bad makes food emotionally charged.
• The food you eat does not make you good or bad.
• Food is actually morally neutral.

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Change your food language

• Do not label or ban food in the first place.
• Stop Black and White thinking.
• Adopt an ‘everything in moderation’ approach to eating
• Consider how your body feels after eating.
• Swap “good” or “bad” for “everyday” or “sometimes” food.
• Enjoy your favourite “sometimes” foods on special occasions.
Listen to your body

- Your body wants you to be healthy.
- Listen out for hints or cues from your body including:
  - ✓ Hunger, fullness
  - ✓ Hypos, hypers
  - ✓ Pain, headaches
  - ✓ Dizziness
  - ✓ Fatigue, Energy levels
  - ✓ Depression, Anxiety
  - ✓ Constipation, Diarrhea, Bloating
- Do not wait for it to get worse before getting help.
- Respond to these cues with inspired action.
- Be proactive and talk to your health care professional and/or leverage your GP.
Focus on what you can eat

• Stop focusing on what you CAN’T eat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Positive Approach</th>
<th>A Negative Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eat more vegetables</td>
<td>Do not eat too much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose low GI carbohydrates</td>
<td>Avoid highly refined carbohydrates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy treats on special occasions</td>
<td>Limit junk food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook more food from scratch</td>
<td>Reduce fast food and take-aways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose fresh food with healthy fats</td>
<td>Avoid saturated fat from processed and fried foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like oily fish, avocado and nuts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink more water</td>
<td>Avoid alcohol and soft drinks</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Focus on what you can eat

• Choose healthy practical habits that you can stick to:

✓ Example: I will cook dinner at home one extra night a week.
✓ Example: I will pack healthy leftovers for lunch everyday.
✓ Example: I will swap dessert for a piece of fruit on weeknights.
✓ Example: I will go for a 20 minute walk after lunch time.

Ask yourself: Can I maintain this habit for the rest of my life?
Live your life

• Ditch the diet – for good.
  Make a commitment to never go on a diet again. Focus on making a lifestyle changes instead.
• Recognise that no one size fits all.
  Find what works for you.
• Become a mindful (not a mindless) eater.
  Make meals a priority. Slow down and tune in.
• Change your food language.
  Eliminate ‘good’ or ‘bad’ food labels. Food is morally neutral.
• Listen to your body.
  Respond to your bodies subtle (yet crucial) cues.
• Focus on what you can eat, not what you can’t eat.
  Change your thoughts toward food.