

Too Much A One Ting Good Fi Nutten

PART 2

Training my mind to eat good foods in moderation

Eating a poor diet can put us at increased risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, hypertension and poor mental health. Today we look at foods and mental health. What we eat can affect our mood and our mood can also influence what and how much we eat.

TRIGGERS FOR EATING

Sometimes we eat, not because we are hungry but because we are bored, stressed, lonely, unable to sleep, watching television or simply because we see food.

It is important to ask ourselves if we are really hungry and here's a chart that may help¹.

EMOTIONAL HUNGER VS PHYSICAL HUNGER

Starts Suddenly

Starts Gradually

Felt mostly in your head or on the surface of your thoughts.

Physically felt within your stomach

A sharp craving that tends to be incessant.

A growling pang that tends to come in waves.

You become fixated on a specific food, taste or texture.

You are open to many options, including less palatable foods.

Hard to satisfy, often leads to eating until uncomfortably full.

Easy to satisfy with a normal amount of food.

May trigger feelings of guilt, self-loathing, regret or shame.

Doesn't make you feel bad about yourself.

Foods that boost mental wellbeing

Some good mood-boosting foods

- **Sweet Potatoes** help to reduce period pain in women. They reduce depression and help to keep blood sugar levels steady and therefore help to prevent mood swings and sugar cravings.
- **Bananas** give a sustained energy boost and are packed with vitamins and potassium which reduces stress and reduces high blood pressure.
- **Leafy greens** such as **broccoli** are an excellent source of folic acid, a lack of which has been linked to a depressed mood.
- **Avocado Pear** contains good fats, and many vitamins and minerals good for mental health.
- **Oatmeal** is rich in soluble fibre which helps to smooth out blood sugar levels by slowing the absorption of sugar into the blood.
- **Peas** and **beans** can help fight depression. **Lentils** are a great food for vegetarians as they also contain protein.

Drink plenty water (6-8 glasses) a day, and more if you are very active or it is a hot day. Not drinking enough water can cause headaches, mood changes, no energy to get up and go, poor concentration and slower responses.

¹ <https://www.sleekgeek.co.za/2017/06/hunger/>

The mind is a powerful tool that can help us manage what and when we eat.

Now that we have considered aspects of good and bad nutrition and here are tips to stop mindless eating adapted from HealthLine².

1. Buy smaller packages
2. Use smaller plates and taller water glasses
3. Keep certain foods out of sight
4. Make it inconvenient to snack/reach foods
5. Eat slowly and savour the full feeling
6. Beware of erroneously labeled "health foods"
7. Don't buy in bulk
8. Focus on food while eating. Avoid distractions like television and social media apps while eating

ACTIVITY ONE

Survey Time

A brief survey on whether you eat too much or too little when stressed - the importance of the mind in excess eating.

This **Salzburg Stress Eating Survey** and can be found here:



	I Eat much less than usual	I Eat less than usual	I Eat just as much as usual	I Eat more than usual	I Eat much more than usual
1 When I am overwhelmed with things I have to do,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 During periods of great stress,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 When I feel things are out of control,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 On days where everything seems to go wrong,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 While preparing for a strenuous task,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 When I am under pressure,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 When I feel nervous or stressed,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 When I feel that I have no influence over the important things in my life,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 When I feel that I am not really on top of things,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 When I feel difficulties have been piling up so high that I cannot overcome them,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

² https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/13-tips-to-stop-mindless-eating#TOC_TITLE_HDR_2

ACTIVITY TWO

Food Diary

Keep a food diary for at least 3 days in one week - 2 weekdays and 1 day on the weekend. Attached to this handout is a form for you to write down all the foods you eat for one week. There is a space for every day of the week but you can choose 3 average days and write down all that you eat.

1. In patients living with diabetes, control of blood pressure and cholesterol is the most important thing to do to prevent early death
2. Only 1 in 10 Jamaicans who have high blood pressure have their high blood pressure under control. Are you one of the 9/10 who are living with uncontrolled high blood pressure?