

Hunger Cues for Kids and Teens

A guide for parents on how to help your children recognize their own hunger cues

Listen to your body

Our body tells us when we are hungry and when we are full. We want to eat when we are hungry and stop eating when we are no longer hungry or when we are satisfied. Eating too much when you are not hungry could make you feel tired and uncomfortable. Try paying attention to your body's hunger and fullness cues. Practice listening to your body – be honest with yourself!



Ask your child, “Has this happened to you before?”

-  Eating chips from the bag in front of the TV
-  Frequently opening the fridge when feeling restless
-  Needing to finish everything on the plate
-  Having strong cravings and eating the desired food too quickly
-  Helping yourself to a treat every time it catches your eye
-  Thinking of the ice cream in the freezer when you are bored



Ask your child, “Can you think of other examples of when you eat when you are not hungry?”

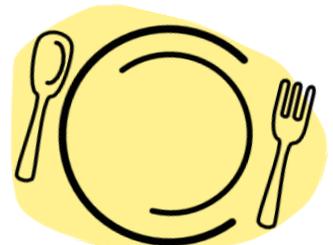
Hungry or not?

If your child seems to be overeating or snacking too often, he or she may not be eating because of hunger. Sometimes kids eat to deal with strong feelings like sadness, loneliness, boredom, anger or tiredness. Your child may not know how to recognize these feelings and deal with them. You can help them identify how they are feeling.



Ask your child, “Do you feel.....?”

Bored	Ashamed	Happy	Afraid	Confused
Angry	Worried	Lonely	Sad	Overwhelmed
Unloved	Upset	Nervous	Tired	Rejected
Guilty	Jealous	Lazy	Excited	Embarrassed



Hunger Scale – Am I hungry or not?



✔ Help your child rate how hungry or full he or she is before and after a meal. If your child has a hard time doing this, you can help by asking:

- How does your body feel when you are hungry?
- Do you remember the last time you ate too much? How did that feel?
- How did you feel after having dinner yesterday?

- ★ Hunger is a natural way for your body to remind you to eat.
- ★ Satisfied means that you are not hungry, but could eat another bite.
- ★ It is normal to eat until you are too full **sometimes** because the food tastes so good.
- ★ Eat away from the TV, laptop or other electronic devices. It is easier to listen to your body when you focus on your food.
- ★ Enjoy the taste and texture of your food!



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We want to eat when we start to feel hungry. Waiting until we are **very hungry** can lead to overeating. If you get too hungry before your next meal, have a small snack in between meals or eat earlier.

It takes time to be good at listening to your cues – so keep practicing!