



## Healthy Living at Hannaford

### The Eight Traits of Emotional Hunger

Emotional and physical hunger can feel identical, unless you've learned to identify their distinguishing characteristics. The next time you feel insatiably hungry, look for these signals that your appetite may be based on emotions rather than true physical need. This awareness may head off an emotional overeating episode.

#### Emotional Hunger...

1. is sudden. One minute you're not thinking about food; the next minute you're starving. Your hunger goes from 0 to 60 within a short period of time.
2. is for a specific food. Your cravings are for one specific type of food, such as chocolate, pasta or a cheese burger. With emotional eating, you feel you need to eat that particular food. No substitute will do!
3. is "above the neck." An emotionally based craving begins in the mouth and mind. Your mouth wants to taste that pizza or chocolate doughnut. Your mind whirls with thoughts about your desired food.
4. is urgent. Emotional hunger urges you to eat NOW! There is a desire to instantly ease emotional pain with food.
5. is paired with an upsetting emotion. Your boss yelled at you. Your child is in trouble at school. Your spouse is in a bad mood. Emotional hunger occurs in conjunction with an upsetting situation.
6. involves automatic or absent-minded eating. Emotional eating can feel as if someone else's hand is scooping up the ice cream and putting it into your mouth (automatic eating). You may not notice that you've just eaten a whole bag of cookies until the bag is empty.
7. does not notice or stop eating in response to fullness. Emotional overeating stems from a desire to cover up painful feelings. The person stuffs herself to quiet her troubling emotions and will eat second and third helpings, even though her stomach may hurt from being stuffed.
8. feels guilty about eating. The paradox of emotional overeating is that the person eats to feel better and ends up berating oneself for eating cookies, cakes or cheeseburgers. One makes promises to oneself (I'll exercise, diet, skip meals, etc., tomorrow).

#### Physical Hunger...

1. is gradual. Your stomach rumbles. One hour later, it growls. Physical hunger gives you steadily progressive clues that it's time to eat.
2. is open to different foods. With physical hunger, you may have food preferences, but they are flexible. You are open to alternative choices.
3. is based in the stomach. Physical hunger is recognizable by stomach sensations. You feel gnawing, rumbling, emptiness, and even pain in your stomach with physical hunger.
4. is patient. Physical hunger would prefer that you eat soon, but it doesn't command you to eat right at that instant.
5. occurs out of physical need. Physical hunger occurs because it has been several hours since your last meal. You may experience light-headedness or low energy if overly hungry.
6. involves deliberate choices and awareness of the eating. With physical hunger, you are aware of the food on your fork, in your mouth, and in your stomach. You consciously choose whether to eat half your sandwich or the whole thing.
7. stops when full. Physical hunger stems from a desire to fuel and nourish the body. As soon as that intention is fulfilled, the person stops eating.
8. realizes eating is necessary. When the intent behind eating is based in physical hunger, there's no guilt or shame. The person realizes that eating, like breathing oxygen, is a necessary behavior.



#### Interested in learning more?

Our registered dietitians hold classes, have on-the-sales-floor nutrition demonstrations and do healthy store tours. They can give you the information you need to make the healthy life style changes you want.

You can also email a private message to our staff registered dietitian, for free nutrition advice at [hannaford.com/asknutritionist](mailto:asknutritionist@hannaford.com).