

Nourish the Mind/Nourish the Body **Resources for Emotional Eating**

- **Do you eat to comfort yourself in stressful situations?**
- **Do you eat out of boredom and/or loneliness?**
- **Do you eat over problems or turmoil in your life?**
- **Do you eat due to something (or someone) missing in your life?**
- **Do you tell yourself, “I’ll do a hard workout to burn off the extra calories” from emotional eating, or try to get rid of the calories in some other way?**

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, you are not alone. Some nutritionists say that emotional overeating is an epidemic in this country. To begin addressing emotional eating:

- Begin to understand the triggers for your emotional eating. One good way to do this is with a **food journal: what I eat, how I feel physically, how I feel emotionally**. Your food journal is for research purposes only, not a vehicle to beat yourself up for overeating.
- **Organize your eating**. Consistently eat breakfast and eat your meals at pretty regular intervals.
- Make eating a **mindful activity**. Really taste and savor your food.
- Drink a minimum of **eight glasses of water** a day. This helps the body to distinguish between thirst and food cravings.
- Give yourself a moment to **feel good about your accomplishment** every time you make a healthy decision.
- Get help to **deal with difficult experiences or feelings**, instead of numbing them with food.*

**adapted from Get with the Program by Bob Greene*

For help with a personalized eating plan at MIT Medical:

- Contact your physician at MIT Medical and ask for a referral to see the MIT Medical nutritionist. You must have a doctor’s referral to see the nutritionist. Tell the nutritionist that you are interested in strategies for overcoming emotional eating.
- Get support for making healthy behavior change and staying motivated, as well as information about eating and body image concerns from the Center for Health Promotion and Wellness. Contact health educators:

Julie Banda banj@med.mit.edu Zan Barry bars@med.mit.edu

Center for Health Promotion and Wellness Library Resources

- Anatomy of a Food Addiction, Anne Katherine, M.A.
- Sugar Addict's Total Recovery Plan, Kathleen DesMaisons, Ph.D.
- When Food is Love, Geneen Roth
- Why Weight? A Guide to Ending Compulsive Eating, Geneen Roth
- Feeding the Hungry Heart, Geneen Roth
- French Toast for Breakfast, Mary Anne Cohen
- Overcoming Binge Eating, Christopher Fairburn, M.D.

Selected Web Resources

- www.somethingfishy.org – resources for all types of food, body image, and compulsive exercise concerns, including educational articles, message boards, and booklists
- www.raderprograms.com – this site for the Rader treatment center features a variety of articles and resources on special topics related to food and body image issues.
- www.radiantrecovery.com – resource from Kathleen Des Maisons, Ph.D., author of Sugar Addicts Recovery Plan; articles and message boards on the physiology and science behind addictive eating.

Other Resources

- MIT Medical Mental Health Service – offers individual counseling and group programs for food and body image issues.
MIT Medical, E23-3rd Floor 617-253-2916
web.mit.edu/medical/services/s-mentalhealth.html
- Massachusetts Eating Disorders Association – offers individual consultation, counseling, and group support.
617-558-1881 www.meda-inc.org
- Cambridge Eating Disorders Center – offers consultation, counseling, nutritional counseling, and group support.
617-547-2255 www.cedc-inc.com

Nourish the Mind/Nourish the Body Healthy Body Image

- **Don't weigh your self-esteem**
 - Untangle body image from self-image. You still have the same kindness, compassion, intelligence, and spirit no matter what your size.
 - Stop obsessing about the number on the scale. Weight gain can reflect additional water, bone mass, muscle mass, etc.

- **Don't compare apples to oranges**
 - The best way to increase your chances of being long and lean is to choose two lean parents – or better yet, four lean grandparents. Notice your family tree.
 - Every body has a biography and no body is perfect.
 - Use your own fitness as a gauge of your goals; ignore celebrity fitness advice – it usually requires a small army, and can be flatly dangerous.

- **Don't let yourself get too...HALT**
 - Hungry
 - Angry
 - Lonely
 - Tired

- **Don't demonize food**
 - Eat mindfully, with enjoyment and gusto.
 - Food is for not the enemy – it is for fuel and for pleasure.

- **Do get yourself something nice to wear at the size you're at**
 - Retail therapy: it's superficial, but it can work!
 - Fake it 'til you feel it.

- **Do work on body esteem as a component of a healthy body**
 - Practice radical self-acceptance as part of any fitness routine, even if you are trying to make loving changes to your body.

- **Do put affirmations down in writing**
 - Shift the focus from what you're “not” to all that you are.