

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) EMOTIONAL EATING

The age of coronavirus is a tough one. The world hasn't experienced a pandemic like this since 1918. No one alive is prepared to deal with this, and no one knows what to expect. It is a time of overwhelming stress. You may be bored, stressed or lonely. Shopping for food has become harder and you may not be used to having access to a kitchen around the clock. If you find that you're often in the kitchen, thinking about your next meal, eating more than you think you need, or stress eating—we promise that you're not alone.

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL EATING AND HOW TO CONQUER IT?

Emotional Eating is a term we use to describe the phenomenon of eating in response to an emotional state, rather than hunger. Emotional eating becomes a problem if it's your only coping mechanism.

CONQUERING EMOTIONAL EATING



Practice Acceptance

If food is what gets you through this time, it's not the worst thing—actually, it may be good self-care. When you survive the pandemic you will have done well for yourself—any weight gain is irrelevant. You have value no matter what your weight.



Make Sure You Are Eating Enough

You do not need to reduce the amount you are eating just because you are now quarantined at home. Eating regularly throughout the day will reduce episodes of stress or unplanned eating. You will also likely help stabilize your blood sugar and regulate your mood.



Expand Your Coping Strategies

If eating has been your only coping strategy, it is good to add new tools to your toolbox. Consider other activities that can soothe, distract, or discharge some nervous energy. These will be unique to each individual, but some ideas can include journaling, painting, calling or texting a friend, going for a walk (while maintaining social distancing), doing a guided meditation, or taking a bath.



Stay Connected

During this time of social distancing, it's more important than ever to maintain our connections. Make sure you stay in contact with friends, family, colleagues, and coworkers. Get creative—have a Facetime gathering or a group meal, have a virtual group meet up or connect with friends during a shared online workout or Netflix watch party.



Resist the Urge to Compensate

You may feel the need to restrict or engage in other compensatory behaviors in order to try to mitigate the impact of your eating. Don't, these behaviors only perpetuate a cycle of disordered or binge eating. You also don't need to increase your exercise to make up for being more sedentary now. Let your body regulate itself.



Practice Self-Care

Now, more than ever is a time to try to protect your mental wellbeing. Take this time to slow down and rest. Try to nourish yourself, get enough sleep, and be gentle with yourself.