

Tuning Into Hunger Cues

Recognizing hunger cues is crucial for maintaining proper nutrition by preventing overeating and undereating, and encouraging healthier food choices.

Types of Hunger Cues

Emotional



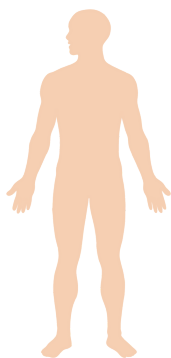
Onset: Emotional hunger often comes on rapidly and is triggered by feelings (stress, boredom).



Craving: Usually for specific comfort foods (sweets, salty snacks).

Feeling: Leaves you feeling guilty or sluggish, not energized.

Physical



Stomach sensations: Growling, rumbling, or a feeling of emptiness.

Energy levels: Low energy, fatigue, or feeling sluggish.

Cognitive function: Difficulty concentrating or "brain fog."

Mood: Irritability or "hanger."

Physical symptoms: Lightheadedness, dizziness, shakiness, or a mild headache.

Strategies to Tune In

- ✓ **Pause before eating:** Take a moment to take a brief body scan to help identify stomach sensations.
- ✓ **Use a hunger scale:** Rate your hunger on a scale of 1 = starving to 10 = painfully full. Aim to eat moderately hungry (3 or 4) and stop when satisfied (6 or 7).
- ✓ **Turn off distractions:** Turn off the TV, put away the phone, and focus on the experience of eating. This helps to identify the moment hunger fades.
- ✓ **Slow down:** Chew your food thoroughly and put your fork down between bites to give your body time to register fullness.
- ✓ **Eat regularly:** Establish consistent meal and snack times to prevent extreme hunger, which can make it harder to notice subtle cues.