

Consequences of Food Addiction

Consequences may include:

- ❑ Frequently continuing to overeat past the point of feeling comfortably full and often feeling unable to stop eating
- ❑ Feelings of guilt or shame after eating
- ❑ Isolating from others when eating
- ❑ Lying to self or others about eating behaviors
- ❑ Taking food that isn't his/hers
- ❑ Emotional or physical withdrawal symptoms when stopping or reducing specific types of foods
- ❑ Distress or difficulty functioning due to behaviors related to eating

Am I ready to make lifestyle changes?

When thinking about your eating habits, ask yourself the following questions:

- ❑ Is changing my eating behaviors **important** to me?
- ❑ Am I **ready** to make changes related to the way I eat?
- ❑ Do I **need help** or support to change my eating behaviors?

Take Control of Your Eating

Here are some tips:

- ❑ Seek help. Talk to your doctor or mental health clinician about your concerns and available options
- ❑ Find a support group of peers that will provide encouragement and guidance
- ❑ Make a list of foods you commonly binge on and the frequency of bingeing
- ❑ Keep a journal to know what feelings or circumstances act as triggers that make you want to reach for food
- ❑ Make a list of healthier ways to soothe yourself. For example, go for a walk, talk to a friend or practice deep breathing
- ❑ Don't skip meals or ignore true hunger signals
- ❑ Keep trigger foods away from your home and work
- ❑ Consider eliminating from your diet white flour, processed sugar, and bad fats (saturated and trans fats)



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Do You Have Concerns About Compulsive/Binge Eating or Food Addiction?



You are not alone.

There are strategies and resources that can help!

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What is Compulsive/Binge Eating?

Eating food is supposed to be enjoyable. Food is meant to nourish our bodies and leave us feeling satisfied and energized.

Yet for some people eating is a stressful event. It can lead to bingeing during a meal or wanting to continue to eat even after an ample meal.

Uncontrollable eating episodes (compulsive or binge eating) can be triggered by particular types of food, emotions or stress.

Common Triggers or Cues

- ❑ Spontaneous mental images of food
- ❑ The first bite of a trigger food
- ❑ Feeling anxious, depressed, or bad
- ❑ Feeling happy or relaxed
- ❑ Feeling bored
- ❑ Judging oneself negatively
- ❑ Experiencing physical pain or discomfort
- ❑ Seeing food advertisements
- ❑ Being at social gatherings or around others who are eating
- ❑ Deeper emotional trauma issues



Consequences of Compulsive/Binge Eating

Consequences may include:

- ❑ Unwanted weight gain / obesity
- ❑ Health problems, such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease
- ❑ Social, relationship and/or work problems
- ❑ Psychological effects, such as low self-esteem, depression, feelings of anxiety and increased irritability

Compulsive/binge eating can produce changes in the brain similar to other addictions

- ❑ The brain develops a stronger preference for foods that are calorie-rich and high in sugar, fat and salt
- ❑ Consuming a lot of these foods starts to activate the brain's reward system and trigger the release of the "pleasure hormone" dopamine, in the same way other addictive substances do – so the brain begins to want more...and more
- ❑ Sometimes, the rewarding nature of these foods can encourage eating to continue whether or not we are hungry, thus making it difficult to stop
- ❑ The behavior that results is not considered "normal" eating behavior
- ❑ A growing number of experts describe this problem as food addiction

What is Food Addiction?

Food addiction is characterized by:

- ❑ Cravings for particular foods that are high in sugar, fat and salt.
- ❑ Thinking one cannot do without his/her favorite food(s)
- ❑ Preoccupation with planning, buying, or eating food- even after having eaten
- ❑ Continued overeating despite adverse medical, emotional or spiritual consequences

These compulsive episodes become more frequent with a progressive increase in:

- ❑ Amount of food consumed
- ❑ Feeling of needing, wanting and craving to consume food to provide comfort, to de-stress or to manage emotional problems

