
Types of Hunger

Why do I have a desire to eat?

- **Mindful Eating:**

This means we are aware of why we are eating rather than eating as a reflex. Whenever you feel the desire to eat, pause and bring awareness to the reasons you are feeling that way. Breathe deeply, take time to find the source of your desire, and consider the four types of hunger:

- **Physical Hunger:**

This is the type of hunger that comes to mind most often. Your stomach might growl, you may lack focus, and think of food a lot. This feeling of hunger starts slowly and gradually becomes more intense. When you eat, hunger should decrease and fade away.

- **Emotional/Heart Hunger:**

Feelings or emotions can sometimes drive someone to eat, and food can be a means to cope with feelings. Emotional hunger is not bad, it is just important that food is not your only coping mechanism. If food is not meeting your emotional needs there may be other factors that need to be identified to learn what will help.

- **Mouth/Taste Hunger:**

Have you ever walked into a home when someone is making your favorite food and you suddenly feel hungry? This hunger is about the experience of eating and is driven by something that sounds, looks, or smells good to you, even if physical hunger is not present. It is normal to satisfy your cravings, but it is important to stay in tune with your body's cues and signals so you know when you have eaten enough.

- **Practical Hunger:**

You eat because you need to at that time. You are eating to prepare for time you will not have access to food. For example, you may eat a meal when you do not feel physically hungry because you know you have an event planned during your normal dinner time. It is important to consider this type of hunger if you have a busy schedule or are unable to listen to your physical cues.