



## Recognizing hunger

We often eat when we're not hungry. One reason may be that many of us can't recognize when our bodies need food.

The sensation of hunger is instinctual. For many people the first twinge of hunger sends them searching for food, often before they need to eat. Feeling a little hungry at the start of a meal is good, but knowing when you could wait longer is also important. Eating every time you feel hungry can result in overeating. If you struggle with this, ask yourself these questions before your next meal.

- Am I hungry? (If you're not sure, wait 20 minutes and ask again.)
- When was the last time I ate? (If it's less than three hours, it may not be real hunger.)
- Could a small snack, water, or calorie-free beverage tide me over until the next meal? (Try and have ready-to-eat fruit or vegetables on hand.)

If you can't recognize when you're hungry, make a schedule -- eat small meals every three to four hours until you learn what hunger feels like. If you overeat at a meal, get back on track at the next one. Learning to recognize internal cues of hunger versus relying on a specific dietary plan or supplements will help you get on the road to long term weight control!

For more information on ways to improve your health through physical activity, contact your local base **Health and Wellness Center** or **Dietitian**.

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