

Eating Behavior Assessment

Disclaimer

This is a self-assessment tool, not diagnostic and should be reviewed with your physician.¹

Instructions

Answer the questions below to gain insights into your relationship with food. When you complete each section, add the numbers of your answers and compare them with the scoring guide at the end of each section.

Questions

Section: Hunger and Eating Cues

1. When food comes up in conversation or in something you read, do you want to eat even if you are not hungry?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Occasionally
4. Frequently
5. Always

2. How often do you eat because of physical hunger?

1. Always
2. Frequently
3. Occasionally
4. Rarely
5. Never

3. Do you have trouble controlling your eating when your favorite foods are around the house?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Occasionally
4. Frequently
5. Always

HUNGER AND EATING CUES: TOTAL SCORE _____

If you scored

3 to 6	You might occasionally eat more than you would like, but it does not appear to be a result of high responsiveness to environmental cues. Controlling the attitudes that make you eat may be especially helpful.
7 to 9	You may have a moderate tendency to eat just because food is available. Dieting may be easier for you if you try to resist external cues and eat only when you are physically hungry.
10 to 15	Some or most of your eating may be in response to thinking about food or exposing yourself to temptations to eat. Think of ways to minimize your exposure to temptations, so that you eat only in response to physical hunger.

Section: Control Over Eating

If the following situations occurred while you were on a diet, would you be likely to eat more or less immediately afterward and for the rest of the day?

- 1. Although you planned on skipping lunch, a friend talks you into going out for a midday meal.**
 1. Would eat much less
 2. Would eat somewhat less
 3. Would make no difference
 4. Would eat somewhat more
 5. Would eat much more

- 2. You "break" your diet by eating a fattening, "forbidden" food.**
 1. Would eat much less
 2. Would eat somewhat less
 3. Would make no difference
 4. Would eat somewhat more
 5. Would eat much more

3. You have been following your diet faithfully and decide to test yourself by eating something you consider a treat.

1. Would eat much less
2. Would eat somewhat less
3. Would make no difference
4. Would eat somewhat more
5. Would eat much more

CONTROL OVER EATING: TOTAL SCORE _____

If you scored

3 to 7	You recover rapidly from mistakes. However, if you frequently alternate between eating out of control and dieting very strictly, you may have a serious eating problem and should get professional help.
8 to 11	You do not seem to let unplanned eating disrupt your program. This is a flexible, balanced approach.
12 to 15	You may be prone to overeat after an event breaks your control or throws you off the track. Your reaction to these problem-causing eating events can be improved.

Section: Emotional Eating

1. Do you eat more than you would like to when you have negative feelings such as anxiety, depression, anger, or loneliness?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Occasionally
4. Frequently
5. Always

2. Do you have trouble controlling your eating when you have positive feelings—do you celebrate feeling good by eating?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Occasionally
4. Frequently
5. Always

3. When you have unpleasant interactions with others in your life, or after a difficult day at work, do you eat more than you'd like?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Occasionally
4. Frequently
5. Always

EMOTIONAL EATING: TOTAL SCORE _____

If you scored

3 to 8	You do not appear to let your emotions affect your eating.
9 to 11	You sometimes eat in response to emotional highs and lows. Monitor this behavior to learn when and why it occurs and be prepared to find alternate activities.
12 to 15	Emotional ups and downs can stimulate your eating. Try to deal with the feelings that trigger the eating and find other ways to express them.

¹Institute of Medicine (US) Committee to Develop Criteria for Evaluating the Outcomes of Approaches to Prevent and Treat Obesity; Thomas PR, editor. *Weighing the Options: Criteria for Evaluating Weight-Management Programs*. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 1995. B, The Diet Readiness Test and the General Well-Being Schedule. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK236747/>