

# 7 Types of Hunger

From "Mindful Eating" by Jan Chonzen-Bays, MD

## MOUTH

The want for a pleasant mouth experience and can vary for each person. Closely linked to culture and the foods that you grew up with.

**To satisfy:** Provide your mouth with desired texture and mouth feel. If thirsty, assess if you want something cold or hot, sweet like juice, salty like vegetable juice, or plain like water.

## NOSE

Primal and closely linked to memory. Smell is used to detect food smells that are rotten, ready to eat, or something we enjoyed in the past. About 80% of the taste of food comes from the smell; our tongues can only taste 5 known flavors but we can recognize thousands of scents.

**To satisfy:** Enhance the smell and taste of foods with flavorings and spices. Some examples, add cinnamon to meal, or hot sauce to pasta.

## MIND

Based on our thoughts, what we hear and read, what others tell us and all the food rules that we place upon ourselves. Mind hunger is supplied by "should"; what we should eat, what we shouldn't eat, how hungry we should feel, etc. The food rules are constantly changing in media, and conflicting opinions. The mind tells us all - we feel like we should start missing a moving target.

**To satisfy:** Listen to your body wants and needs. Choose a middle path of balance, variety and non-judgment when it comes to foods rather than extremes and popular opinions of the moment. Being mindful of the meal in a positive way will help quiet the mind games and therefore satisfy the mind hunger.

## EYE

When a food looks good as the description on the menu even if you are not at dinner, photos in magazines and magazines advertising.

**To satisfy:** Add a variety of colors, shapes and colors to your plate. Examples: foods that are different colors, crunchy or soft, liquid and solid.

## STOMACH

There are times when your stomach tells you it's time to eat. Even though hunger cues are different, there are common ones such as growling, gurgling or emptiness of the stomach, headaches, lightheadedness, or becoming tired. There is a Japanese word "hara-gei" which means "stomach wisdom", the more you are in tune with your body the more this wisdom grows.

**To satisfy:** Fuel your body with the energy it needs. With a mindfulness you will be able to tell when you need to eat and when to stop eating because you are full or consumed the energy your body required.

## EAR

Bodies have an instinctive awareness of what nutrients are needed. As babies we are born with this awareness, but the signals may become disconnected over time. Listening to what our body is "craving" and supplying it with that nutrient. Our bodies have different needs at different times and all is a natural part of being human.

**To satisfy:** Listen to your cravings and respectfully supply your body with what it's desiring.

## HEART

Some foods are tied to pleasant memories like spending time with family during holidays, or a special dish that Grandma made when you were sick. This type of hunger is often taken for stomach hunger and creates that feeling of emptiness that doesn't seem to solve even after consuming a meal which may result in feelings of dissatisfaction.

**To satisfy:** Food cannot solve the issue of the heart hunger need for connection and love. When you recognize that the hunger is coming from this place see if you can create a connection with someone instead. That may be phoning a friend, going to sit and watch a movie with your sibling or playing fetch with your dog. Going to comfort foods in times of need is a part of being human and normal eating, the important part is to be mindful and recognize the place that this hunger is coming from. Food can only do so much for physical nourishment, and the rest is up to you for emotional nourishment.

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