

## Life Steps

### RESPONDING TO HUNGER

Hunger isn't your enemy. Instead, it's a friend! Just like the needle of the fuel gauge in your car, hunger lets you know that your body's running low and needs to be 'refueled'.

However, hunger can be linked with a number of internal and external events. For example, some people eat when they feel blue (internal event) or have to stop to get a milkshake when they pass a fast food restaurant (external event). In other words, the internal event or external event is linked with eating. The result is that these events trigger eating, not hunger.

### LISTENING TO YOUR BODY

Many people become conditioned to eat as a result of internal and external cues rather than when they are truly hungry. To help you to break the links between external and internal cues and eating, review each strategy noted below. Then, circle the one that you will execute over the next two weeks.

### OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND, OUT OF MOUTH

One of the best ways to break the link between the sight of a favorite food (external cue) and the automatic necessity of eating is not to have the food around in the first place! If you know you are going to eat the entire bag of your favorite cookies at one sitting, then don't buy them! Or, if you must buy them, place them in a cupboard behind a closed door or in a container so they aren't 'staring at you' begging to be eaten.

### TV AND EATING ARE NOT ONE AND THE SAME

Many people are accustomed to eating every time they turn on the television. If you watch television while you eat, you can't pay attention to what you're eating! Limit your eating to one area in your home, preferably your kitchen or dining room table. And, when you eat, focus on just that...eating. Turn off the television, put down the paper, and enjoy the taste, texture and aroma of the food you are eating.

### FEELING LONELY, DEPRESSED, OR BORED DOESN'T MEAN IT'S OK TO BINGE EAT

Some people reach for 'comfort food' when they feel empty, lonely, depressed or bored. The feeling state (versus hunger) is linked to eating. Rather than 'treat' the feeling with food, embrace it and let it guide you to a better understanding of your personal needs. Specifically, how can you meet and spend time with others who can comfort you? Can what is making you sad be changed or managed better so you don't feel depressed? And, if you are bored, what can you do to 'light your fire' of interest and fun?

