

Loss of appetite or overeating

How does depression affect eating habits?



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Who is this booklet for?

Do you feel that, when you're stressed or discouraged, food becomes a battlefield? Whether you're **losing your appetite or overeating**, your body is sending signals.

If you notice this change, this booklet is your guide! It offers explanations and simple techniques to help you understand this connection and regain your well-being. Enjoy your reading!

How does depression affect eating?

The relationship between depression and eating disorders, such as binge eating or loss of appetite, is very close. It's as if these problems are interconnected.

Why does this happen?

Depression affects mood, and in search of relief from sadness and emptiness, a person may use food as a refuge, overeating. In other cases, depression causes a total loss of interest in food, leading to a lack of appetite that can cause health problems.





These signs become **concerning** when they occur frequently and cause changes in the body, such as:

Losing or **gaining a lot of weight** without dieting (for example, changing more than 5% of your weight in a month);

Feeling less or **more hungry** almost every day for at least two weeks in a row.

Understanding the symptoms:

Binge eating

Have you ever had that moment when **you ate way more than you wanted to** and then felt like **“I couldn’t control myself”**??



For example,

when someone ends a relationship and, out of sheer sadness, ends up eating three tubs of ice cream at once, trying to ease the pain? Or when you come home stressed from work and take it all out on chocolate bars—even if you’re not a chocolate fan?

This can happen to anyone and is often linked to **sadness, anxiety, or stress**, it’s not a lack of willpower, nor is it always about weight or appearance.

Binge eating plays a big role in our emotions. It’s common to feel guilt, shame, or fear after these episodes, but that doesn’t mean you’re alone or that there’s no solution. **Recognizing** these signs already shows courage, and it’s a huge step toward taking care of yourself and seeking help.

What to do?

Did you know that this symptom can be managed?

One of the techniques that can help is **Emotional Regulation for Binge Eating**.

But what exactly is this “**emotional regulation**”?

It’s not a magic technique; it’s how the body tries to balance the emotions we feel. When someone has binge eating, it’s usually because they’re **struggling with a difficult emotion** and tries to relieve it by eating.

So, what do I do about it?

The idea is to learn to notice when this happens and what’s going through your mind at that moment. To help, **grab a notebook and write down three things:**



1 Write down: What happened that made you really want to eat or caused you to feel a strong emotion?

2 Write down: What thoughts and actions came to mind at the time?

3 Write down: What do you think about not being able to handle that?

LIKE

"I can't stand this breakup"

"I can't take this job anymore"

"I don't know how to handle this"

When you go through something similar again, remember these notes. That way, you'll realize which emotions and thoughts push you to overeat—and end up making you feel even worse.

Try doing something other than eating, but something that's comforting and soothing for you, and try to think of alternatives to your thoughts. For example, is it really true that you don't know how to handle this or that you can't stand this breakup? **Small changes can make a big difference!**



Understanding the symptoms:

Loss of appetite

Imagine that, suddenly, food just isn't appealing anymore. Your favorite dish no longer appeals to you. You don't feel hungry, and going hours without eating doesn't seem to be a problem. This is a Lack of Appetite, or, as doctors call it, Hyporexia. It's not like being on a diet; it's a **genuine loss of interest in eating.**



What
might you
feel?

Skipping meals without noticing

lunch becomes a snack, and dinner doesn't even happen.

Losing weight without meaning

your clothes start to get looser and you don't understand why.

An "upset" stomach

just thinking about food makes you feel slightly nauseous.

Eating becomes a chore

you eat only because you "have to," not because you enjoy it.

Have you ever experienced something like this?

This technique might help you...

Thoughts and Behaviors Log

It's a tool that functions as a kind of structured "journal."

The goal is to help you identify and analyze the relationship between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, especially the dysfunctional ones.

Essentially, the technique helps you transition from being a passive victim of your automatic thoughts to becoming an agent of change in your life.

In the case of a lack of appetite, it helps you understand why you've lost interest in eating.

Identify the event: what led to the loss of appetite

Write down the situation. Think of a moment in your day when you were supposed to eat but didn't feel like it.

Example: "It was lunchtime, I sat down at the table, and looked at my plate without feeling any hunger."

Discover the Trigger Thought associated with the **loss of appetite**

What thought crossed your mind?
This thought is the key to understanding the problem.

Example: "It's not worth eating. I don't have the energy to chew. Food doesn't give me pleasure, so why bother?"

The Emotion and the Action

What emotion did that thought generate, and what was your reaction?

Example: "I felt a deep sadness, so I got up from the table and didn't eat."

Now that you've identified the cycle, it's time to break it.

And the **Cognitive Restructuring** technique can help you.

The main benefit of the Cognitive Restructuring (or thought restructuring) technique is that it allows you to change how you feel by changing how you think.

1 Question the Thought

"Is it true that food doesn't give me pleasure? Maybe it doesn't give me the same pleasure as before, but food is nourishment for my body"

"What will happen if I keep not nourishing myself? It will make me weaker and leave me without energy, which will only make how I feel worse."

2 Create an Alternative

Think of a different action you can take to break the inertia.

Example: Instead of getting up and giving up, you can say: "I don't need to eat the whole plate, but I'll try to eat a small portion."

By acknowledging and re-framing the thought, you step off autopilot and start finding solutions instead of giving in to feelings of sadness and disinterest.



If food has lost its pleasure or become a refuge, it's a sign that something needs to be addressed with care. Recognizing these symptoms is already an **important step**. Seeking psychological help is the next step toward understanding and addressing what lies behind this relationship with food.

You don't have to go through this alone.



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