

SOMERSET WEIGHT MANAGEMENT SERVICE

EMOTIONAL EATING

COPING WHILST SOCIALLY DISTANCING

HELP! I AM EATING MORE AT THE MOMENT

This is a time of considerable stress and uncertainty and you may not be in your usual work, exercise or social routine.

When we are feeling stressed our body produces high levels of the stress hormone, cortisol. Cortisol triggers cravings for salty, sweet, and fried foods—foods that give us a burst of energy and pleasure.

IT'S A HABIT

Food is a very powerful way of distracting ourselves from emotion. We might eat when we're happy, or to reward ourselves after a hard day.

At the moment, we might eat because we're lonely, scared, irritated or stressed.

The more we use food to cope the less we use other strategies.

MY MEALTIMES ARE NOT REGULAR

Missing meals, or picking at food throughout the day rather than having set meals will make it difficult to regulate the amount of food we are eating.



It will be harder to resist snacking if we are not feeling satisfied from having had a recent meal.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Set regular mealtimes
- Eat mindfully (i.e. notice flavour, chew slowly, pause)
- Don't make it hard for yourself by buying your favourite snack food
- When you notice an urge to snack:
 - Stop
 - Breathe
 - Notice how you are feeling

**ALTERNATIVES**

How else can you manage your feelings?

- talking to others
- allowing the feelings
- gently reassuring yourself
- writing them in a journal
- reminding yourself your feelings will pass

How else can you soothe yourself?

- listening to music
- stroking a pet
- having a bath
- breathing or relaxation exercises
- stretching
- exercising

BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Now is not the time to be starting a restrictive diet but nor is it the time to tell yourself that it doesn't matter. **YOU MATTER.**



Sometimes the strategies above will work, and sometimes they won't. Try not to be too critical of yourself or feel that you are a failure. You are doing the best that you can.