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## Overeaters anonymous plan of eating

Maybe it was that fifth handful of sour cream and cheddar chips, or the third trip to the buffet line. Regardless, many of us have had experience with overeating. So what causes this uncontrollable urge to stuff our faces? With one-third of the U.S. adult population suffering from obesity, people are flocking to the next fad diet or fat-busting fitness program. But that can't solve the problem for everyone in the long run. Instead, lets dig a little deeper to discover why we overeat (and how to stop).The Stuffing — The Need-to-KnowShare on PinterestPhoto: BigstockSo here's the breakdown: When we have cravings, good memories we've tied to that specific food comes to mind. These pleasing memories fuel our anticipation to eat that food. Once we eat it, we feel rewarded, and the brain keeps seeking that reward until the food is gone. But it's not just about old memories. The body can play other tricks to make us think it's time to chow down, too.Mixed SignalsEver eat something, but the stomach keeps rumbling like it's asking for more? It can be easy to misread out bodies' signals and needs, and the mixed messages start at an early age. One study found out that three year olds stop eating when full because they're better at listening to their bodies' hunger cues. Five year olds, on the other hand, start paying attention to factors other than hunger when chowing down, so they'll often finish what's in front of them, even after they're fullServing portion size influences 5-year-old but not 3-year-old children's food intakes.Rolls BJ, Engell D, Birch LL. Nutrition Department, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, USA. Journal of American Dietetic Association, 2000 Feb;100(2):232-4. But it's not just about the full factor: We can also misread what our bodies are telling us to feed them. Another study found that people tend reach for super salty foods when they're actually dehydratedWater deprivation-induced sodium appetite. De Luca L.A. Jr., Pereira-Derderian D.T., Vendramini R.C., et al. Department of Physiology and Pathology, School of Dentistry-FOAr, São Paulo State University, Araraquara, São Paulo, Brazil. Physiology and Behavior, 2010 Jul 14;100(5):535-44..Mindless EatingWhen the latest brood of botoxed housewives (or football players) are brawling on TV, it's all too easy to stuff our faces with whatever's within reach and not even notice how much we're consuming. That uber-entertaining TV show can easily distract from the natural food cues our bodies are giving us. Plus, commercials tend to lure folks in with 37 percent of them hawking delicious food items. In fact, some research suggests that watching TV during mealtime promotes overeating and weight gainObesityTV: How television is influencing the obesity epidemic. Boulos R., Vikre E.K., Oppenheimer S., et al. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University, Boston, MA 02111, USA. Physiology and Behavior, 2012 Aug 20;107(1):146-53.. Food environment, or the atmosphere, distractions, and people we surround ourselves with, can also have a huge effect on the quality and quantity of what we eat.Emotional and Stress EatingWhen life starts to get hectic and dramatic like the latest soap opera, many people use food for comfort to cope with negative emotions. Emotional eating can increase happiness for a short time, but the harm is more long livedThe psychobiology of comfort eating: implications for neuropharmacological interventions. Gibson EL. Department of Psychology, Whitelands College, University of Roehampton, London, UK. Behavioural Pharmacology, 2012 Sep;23(5-6):442-60.. Actually, people with stress related problems are 13.4 percent more likely to be overweight or obeseOverweight and obesity are associated with emotion- and stress-related eating as measured by the eating and appraisal due to emotions and stress questionnaire.Ozier A.D., Kendrick O.W., Leeper J.D., et al. Northern Illinois University, School of Family, Consumer, and Nutrition Sciences, Nutrition, Dietetics, and Hospitality Administration, DeKalb, IL. Journal Of American Dietetic Association, 2008 Jan;108(1):49-56. To Binge, or Not to Binge — The AnswerDebateIf overeating is a personal issue, don't worry — there are ways to correct the bad habit!Uncover the culprit. Be careful! What we interpret as hunger might actually be thirst. When craving a salty snack, try sipping on a glass of water first to see if the hunger subsides.Keep an eye on portions. Controlling portion sizes is one of the best ways to prevent overeating.Distractio, be gone! Focus on the plate in front of you at that next meal, and banish distractions like TV or email from the dinner table.Be aware of your feelings. Are you chowing down on a box of cookies because someone bummed you out at work? Recognize the reasons behind the binge to help stop unnecessary eating. If you're eating because of stress or emotional issues, talk to someone!Break the habit. Since habits are built over time, overeaters must consistently disrupt their habit to get rid of it.One last thing: Overeating and food addiction can be serious medical issues. If you feel the way you eat has turned into more than just a bad habit, it's important to consider looking for professional help. Talk to your doctor about healthy eating habits, and check out sites like foodaddicts.org to help figure out if those habits are more like an addiction.This article has been read and approved by Greatist experts Carlene Thomas and Tina Gowin.Are you an overeater? How do you combat the urges to chow down (and not stop)? Let us know in the comments below! A meal plan is your guide for when, what, and how much to eat to get the nutrition you need while keeping your blood sugar levels in your target range. A good meal plan will consider your goals, tastes, and lifestyle, as well as any medicines you're taking. A good meal plan will also: Include more nonstarchy vegetables, such as broccoli, spinach, and green beans. Include fewer added sugars and refined grains, such as white bread, rice, and pasta with less than 2 grams of fiberexternal icon per serving. Focus on whole foods instead of highly processed foodsexternal icon as much as possible. Carbohydrates in the food you eat raise your blood sugar levels. How fast carbs raise your blood sugar depends on what the food is and what you eat with it. For example, drinking fruit juice raises blood sugar faster than eating whole fruit. Eating carbs with foods that have protein, fat, or fiber slows down how quickly your blood sugar rises. For more information, see Carb Counting. You'll want to plan for regular, balanced meals to avoid high or low blood sugar levels. Eating about the same amount of carbs at each meal can be helpful. Counting carbs and using the plate method are two common tools that can make planning meals easier too. Counting Carbs Keeping track of how many carbs you eat and setting a limit for each meal can help keep your blood sugar levels in your target range. Work with your doctor or a registered dietitian to find out how many carbs you can eat each day and at each meal, and then refer to this list of common foods that contain carbs and serving sizes. For more information, see Carb Counting. The Plate Method It's easy to eat more food than you need without realizing it. The plate method is a simple, visual way to make sure you get enough nonstarchy vegetables and lean protein while limiting the amount of higher-carb foods you eat that have the highest impact on your blood sugar. Start with a 9-inch dinner plate (about the length of a business envelope); Fill half with nonstarchy vegetables, such as salad, green beans, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and carrots. Fill one quarter with a lean protein, such as chicken, turkey, beans, tofu, or eggs. Fill one quarter with carb foods. Foods that are higher in carbs include grains, starchy vegetables (such as potatoes and peas), rice, pasta, beans, fruit, and yogurt. A cup of milk also counts as a carb food. Then choose water or a low-calorie drink such as unsweetened iced tea to go with your meal. Did you know? Food portions are much larger now than they were 20 years ago. Test your knowledge of portion distortion hereexternal icon. About Portion Size Portion size and serving size aren't always the same. A portion is the amount of food you choose to eat at one time, while a serving is a specific amount of food, such as one slice of bread or 8 ounces (1 cup) of milk. These days, portions at restaurants are quite a bit larger than they were several years ago. One entrée can equal 3 or 4 servings! Studies show that people tend to eat more when they're served more food, so getting portions under control is really important for managing weight and blood sugar. If you're eating out, have half of your meal wrapped up to go so you can enjoy it later. At home, measure out snacks; don't eat straight from the bag or box. At dinnertime, reduce the temptation to go back for seconds by keeping the serving bowls out of reach. And with this "handy" guide, you'll always have a way to estimate portion size at your fingertips: 3 ounces of meat, fish, or poultry Palm of hand (no fingers) 1 ounce of meat or cheese Thumb (tip to base) 1 cup or 1 medium fruit Fist 1–2 ounces of nuts or pretzels Cupped hand 1 tablespoon Thumb tip (tip to 1st joint) 1 teaspoon Fingertip (tip to 1st joint) Overeaters Anonymous (OA) is an organization that helps people who are recovering from compulsive eating and other eating disorders. Recovery from an eating disorder can be difficult without the right support and resources, and OA aims to help. This article gives an overview of the OA food plan, information to help you create your own plan, and tips for a healthy diet.Share on PinterestOA offers recovery tools for people experiencing compulsive eating, binge eating, and other eating disorders. The organization follows a 12-step approach and is centered on group meetings and sponsors to aid with recovery.OA has created a Plan of Eating to help people recover from compulsive eating behaviors. The plan aims to identify specific eating patterns and guide healthy eating decisions.The plan is individualized. It doesn't provide any specific suggestions for foods, calorie totals, or other restrictions. Instead, it aims to guide your recovery with the help of your doctor or a dietitian.The primary focus of the plan is abstinence from harmful behaviors rather than weight loss. You don't need to have overweight or obesity to join OA. But some members may choose to use their plans to manage their weight on a steady and sustainable schedule.OA may have benefits if you:have obsessive thoughts about your body weighthave obsessive thoughts about fooduse diet pills or laxatives with the aim of weight lossfeel compelled toward binge eatingOA recognizes that compulsive overeating can be physical, emotional, and spiritual. The organization recommends that your Plan of Eating be part of a holistic approach.SummaryOvereaters Anonymous (OA) offers individualized eating plans and tools that can help promote recovery from compulsive eating behaviors.There are several benefits and downsides to consider with the OA food plan.BenefitsOne of the major advantages of this plan is that it's individualized, meaning that you're able to create an eating plan specifically for you and receive support along the way. Another advantage is that if your plan isn't working for you, you can toss it out and start from scratch.This is especially beneficial because recovery from an eating disorder is a process. It may take several drafts to find the right approach for you.When drafting your plan, remember to take into account eating out, weekends, and busy schedules. Planning ahead for these occasions can help you stay on track.DownsidesThe plan requires its users to consider their trigger foods and other behaviors while working to find a new way of dealing with food and eating.This can be difficult, as food choices are underpinned by complex emotions. Developing a plan where you have to think about food often can be triggering for some people.Compulsive eating is about more than just food. Eating disorders are complex and linked with mental health. They often involve complicated emotions, like guilt and shame, that can be difficult to deal with.It can be difficult to recover from them alone. If you're struggling with recovering from an eating disorder, binge eating, or emotional eating on your own, it can help to reach out to a doctor or trained mental health professional.They can help you focus your attention on healing, while also getting the foods your body needs to thrive.SummaryThe OA food plan is individualized and can be customized to fit your preferences. On the other hand, it requires you to carefully examine your diet history and work with a healthcare provider to ensure success.Although there's no written plan for eating, OA provides some helpful prompts on different pamphlets and worksheets in its document library.Start brainstorming, both alone and with your local OA group, and write down everything you think could be useful.Some questions you might ask include:What nutrients does my body need to function?How many meals or snacks do I need each day?What foods encourage overeating or bingeing?What behaviors encourage overeating or bingeing?What tools or supports do I have to help in my journey?Try to focus your plan on abstinence by writing out your own affirmation or vision.Your plan might include eating three meals per day with two snacks, or six small meals with no snacks. There's no right or wrong plan as long as you make sure you're meeting your nutritional needs and avoiding potential triggers.OA also offers a couple of pamphlets at a low cost that provide more guidance:A Plan of Eating: A Tool for Living — One Day at a TimeDignity of ChoiceYou'll also find several sample food plans that have been approved by licensed dietitians.However, remember that everyone's nutritional needs are different. These sample food plans may be a good guide, but make sure you speak with a registered dietitian to come up with the right plan for you.SummaryWhen creating your plan, be sure to consider your nutritional needs, trigger foods, and eating behaviors. There are plenty of resources and sample plans available to help you get started.There's no one plan of eating that works for everyone. What you consume and how much is ultimately up to you.Focus on the following areas when writing up your plan:Follow a balanced dietYou'll want to include a variety of foods in your diet. This is the best way to get the nutrients you need. Be sure to include ingredients from all the following groups in your plan:Cooking with whole foods is more beneficial for your overall health than cooking with packaged alternatives. It may even help you avoid certain triggers.When choosing foods, also ask your doctor if there are any ingredients you need to limit, especially if you have health conditions like: diabeteshigh cholesterolhigh blood pressureConsider the timing of your mealsThe amount of time between meals and snacks is another area you'll want to consider.Some people like eating three meals per day: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Other people prefer smaller, more frequent meals. Others like snacking throughout the day.The time you eat and how frequently you eat may be based on your daily schedule, your physical activity level, and any binge triggers.The U.S. Department of Agriculture offers a tool called ChooseMyPlate.org. It offers sample food plans for people of all ages. The timing of your meals shouldn't matter as long as you're getting the right nutrients.It's best to review these plans with a healthcare provider to find one that works for you.Practice healthy portion sizesMany people find the most difficult part of the plan is managing how much they eat at any one time. Here are a few tips to help practice healthy portion sizes:Measure out portions before mealtime Freeze individual portions of meals so you can eat them later.Eat from a plate and not a package Use smaller plates or bowls.Split meals with a friend, or package up half before starting to eat.Try to eat more slowly so your body has time to register when it starts to feel full Visual cues can make portion sizes more automatic. You can learn more about healthy food portion sizes at ChooseMyPlate.gov.SummaryEnjoying a variety of nutritious whole foods, eating at regular intervals, and eating healthy portion sizes can help you have a healthier diet. The OA Plan of Eating aims to help people recover from compulsive eating. While this plan may not be right for everyone, it can help some.The plan is individualized, and there are plenty of resources available to help find what works for you.Try attending a local OA meeting to see if OA is a good match for you. If so, discuss the OA eating plan with your doctor and a registered dietitian to create the best plan for you.

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