

Why do you eat? Do you eat because you're hungry? Do you eat because you're stressed or bored? Or, do you eat because food smells good?

Many things trigger eating. Food cues are the sights, smells, thoughts, feelings, and events that make us want to eat. Cues apply to being active, too. Some things trigger us to be active. Other things trigger us to be inactive.

Which of the cues below apply to you? Add some of your own in the blanks provided.

I want to eat when:

- I am hungry.
- I am tired.
- I am bored.
- I feel sad or lonely.
- I had a long day at work.
- I feel stressed.
- I see other people enjoying food.
- I see TV commercials for food.
- I smell food.
- I think "I've already wrecked my diet."
- A family member or friend nags me about my diet.
- I drive past fast food restaurants.
- _____
- _____

I skip my plans to be active when:

- I get too busy and forget.
- My boss gives me a deadline.
- I forget to bring my walking shoes to work.
- My exercise buddy cancels.
- I feel stressed or tired.
- I see other people watching TV.
- It rains or is cold outside.
- I think "I'm already off track for this week."
- A family member or friend nags me about being active.
- I think "I'm never going to stick to this."
- _____
- _____

Cues can lead you away from your weight-loss goals. The good news is that once you identify your cues, you can take control of them. Here are some tips for taking control of cues.

1. **Stay away from cues.** Keep cookies and treats out of sight. Stay away from the TV.
2. **Add "good" cues.** Keep your walking shoes and an umbrella by the front door. Keep healthy snacks, such as fruit, on the counter.
3. **Start a healthy habit.** When you feel stressed or upset, take a walk instead of eating.

Five ways to reduce food cues:

1. Keep high-calorie, high-fat foods out of your house.
2. Eat only in the kitchen or dining room.
3. Don't eat while watching TV.
4. Don't walk down the snack aisle at the grocery store.
5. Don't go food shopping when you are hungry.



A healthier life is on the line for you!

CMN11-1117-5
UPMC_11_581

UPMC HEALTH PLAN

Copyright 2009 UPMC Health Plan, Inc. All rights reserved
C ON C WM CUES C20091201-27 (MCG) 12/20/11 PDF

Use the Cues to Help You Lose

Here are some tips for handling common cues. Add some of your own in the blanks provided.

Where	Cue and Your Response	How to Handle It
At home	I pick at leftovers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put leftovers out of sight before you eat. • Freeze them. • Make less food. • _____
	I can't resist snacks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy only one or a few single servings. • Store them out of sight. • Keep a bowl of fresh fruit on the counter. • _____
	I want to eat what my family is eating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat family meals once or twice a week. • Plan healthier meals for the whole family. • Have a healthy snack option for yourself. • _____
	I crave everything I see on TV.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk around the house during commercials. • _____
	I think "I'm too tired to walk tonight."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk back with a positive thought, such as: "Being active will give me some energy. I can get started and see how I feel."
Eating out	I eat everything on my plate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order a doggie bag and take half home. • Order half or lunch-size portions. • _____
At the grocery store	The bakery smells so good!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a shopping list. Stick to it. • Avoid the bakery and other aisles that may be tempting. • _____
At work	I get hungry in late afternoon. Then I get candy from the vending machine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pack a healthy snack such as a piece of fruit. • _____
	I get so busy that I forget to be active.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a timer or alarm. • Make a plan to be active with a co-worker. • _____



A healthier life is on the line for you!

UPMC HEALTH PLAN

Use the Cues to Help You Lose

Take Action

In the box below, identify your own cues. Pick two for unhealthy eating and two for being inactive. Then write your plan for handling those cues.

Cue for unhealthy eating	How I will handle it
1.	1.
2.	2.
Cue for being inactive	How I will handle it
1.	1.
2.	2.

Now add cues to help you stay on track.

Healthy eating cues	Activity cues
1.	1.
2.	2.

Source: Information provided by the University of Pittsburgh Obesity and Nutrition Research Center (grant DK046204 from the National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases).



A healthier life is on the line for you!

UPMC HEALTH PLAN