

Emotional Eating

Emotions are a primary cause for overeating and for choosing unhealthy or “comfort” foods. There are many techniques to help you recognize and cope with your emotions. One of my favorites was developed by Duke University and adapted from some behavioral coping strategies created by other self help programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous. It works like this: Any time that you are feeling tempted to eat, ask yourself if you are: **Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired**. The mnemonic for this is **H.A.L.T**.

If you feel **Hungry**...

1. Please first drink a glass of water. Many times thirst can make you think you are hungry.
2. If you are still feeling hungry, but it is not time for your next meal, you may choose to have one of the snacks such as Boullion or celery or pickle, or any of the other allowed snacks.
3. You can also have another Medifast product a little early. Some days you may find that you have actually done a 6 and 1 program instead of 5 and 1, and I'm here to tell you that is perfectly OK. It is much better to have an extra 100 calories through a highly nutritious, well balanced meal than any other food I can think

of. And, you'll stay in fat burning status, which is where you want to be!!

If you are feeling **Angry**, try one of these strategies...

1. Stay away from people or situations that trigger anger or emotional eating.
2. Learn to disperse this negative emotion by doing another activity such as walking, marching in place, or bicycling.
3. It can be helpful to learn relaxation techniques to calm your anger. Here are some exercises to reduce stress caused from anger
 - Shrug your shoulders 10 times
 - Stretch your arms overhead with fingers straight up. Hold this stretch for 30 seconds and repeat.
 - While keeping shoulders relaxed, tilt your head toward one shoulder and hold 10 seconds and then tilt head towards your other shoulder
 - Stand up with your feet apart and swing your arms gently from side to side feeling your shoulders relaxing.

If you are feeling **Lonely** ...

1. Have activities planned for times when you are feeling lonely such as call a friend, plan an outing, do yard work, go to the gym
2. Get involved with a new hobby or activity
3. Volunteer at a local shelter or hospital
4. Talk to your health coach and find a good friend that you can talk to about everything! Your ups and your downs!
5. Start your own support group with your friends or co-workers that are also on the program with you. Have a buddy calling system set up.

If you are feeling **Tired...**

1. then take a break away from what ever you may be doing.
2. Make sure you are getting all your products in and you are drinking your water.
3. Take a 20 minute "power nap".
4. Meditation or yoga can also help reduce stress and feelings of fatigue.

Final Words of Wisdom...

Remember to always replace any negative thoughts with positive thoughts. Take all your past concepts of why you have not been able to lose weight and throw them out the window. Fill your mind with a "can Do" attitude and don't let any one or any thing that has happened in the

past keep you from reaching your goal! (for example: I can only stay on a diet for one week, my whole family is overweight, so a guess I will be too).

You can do what ever your mind sets out to do. You just have to believe it yourself and want it bad enough to go for it no matter what! I know you have the ability to do it...do you?