

UNDERSTANDING HUNGER

The body has its own communication system for hunger and fullness.

There are 2 types of hunger the body experiences:

- a) Biological feeling of hunger
- b) Emotional feeling of hunger

Most people experienced hunger as an emergency. However, hunger is not an emergency! When we get hungry and our brains notice our blood sugar dropping, our bodies release adrenaline. Adrenaline is our “fight-or-flight” hormone. When it’s unleashed, it feels like panic. Our heart races. We feel panicky. This feeling will be especially strong if you’ve had a lot of sugar or caffeine beforehand. We're not used to going without food for long periods. We can access food pretty much 24 hours a day, unlike our ancestors who had to go hungry if the hunting and gathering was not successful.

Understand that hunger is not an emergency.

You will not starve to death if you don’t get food immediately! When you're hungry, take the following steps:

- 1) Slow down for a second and pay attention. Press an imaginary red STOP button.
- 2) Ask yourself - are you experiencing physical or emotional hunger?
- 3) Relax it is not an emergency. Breathe.
- 4) Rate your discomfort on a scale from 1 to 10.
10 equaling the worst discomfort, and 0 no discomfort at all.
- 5) Consider for a moment, what would be a helpful choice to make in the situation? Can you wait until you organise healthy food, maybe drink some water?
- 6) Have you prepared a coping strategy that you can use?

Going through those steps will help you to STOP for a moment and consider your options. It will make you aware of what is going on in your head and body. Is it emotional or physical hunger?

Look at the worksheet on how the two types of hunger differ and how you can recognise which type you are experiencing.

Being aware will allow you to make choices! Make the choice that is right for you at this moment!