

Eating well for recovery 1



What is eating well?

Eating well involves consuming a variety of foods and maintaining a balanced diet. It also means having a diet free from restrictions, which you might have imposed due to distress, shame, guilt, or other issues related to your eating habits. Eating well allows for the flexible incorporation of all food groups into your diet.

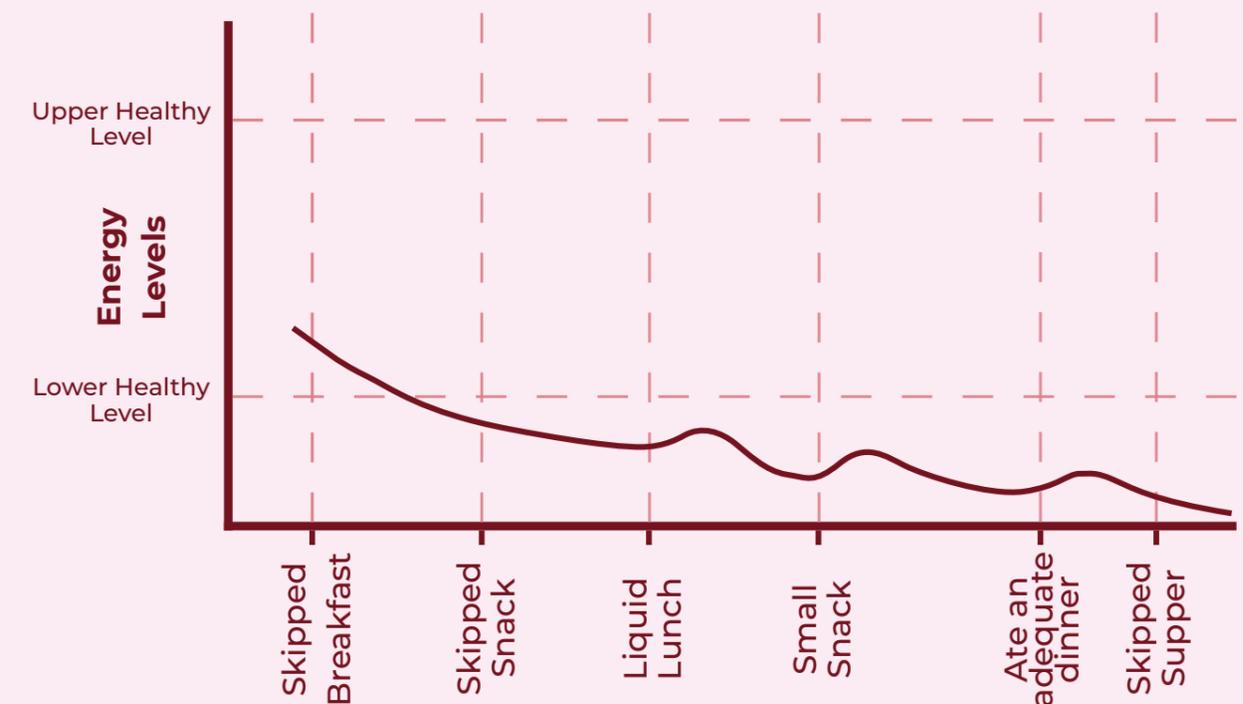
Eating regularly is crucial to support recovery, even though it may be challenging in the early stages. This practice helps maintain adequate energy levels, protects against hunger, reduces the risk of binge eating, and enhances overall functioning and well-being.

Do you have specific emotions or thoughts when engaging in disordered eating?

Can you recall a recent time when you experienced eating problems? Please note below any physical responses you noticed in your body?

What are the signs of low energy?

When we haven't eaten for extended periods or haven't included enough carbohydrates in our meals and snacks, our energy levels can drop. Low energy often leads to symptoms such as tiredness, irritability, and more.



No matter how much we eat in one sitting, it's normal to only get 3-4 hours of energy from that meal. When your blood sugar levels drop, several physical and emotional symptoms occur, signalling to your brain that your body needs food.

Common symptoms of low blood sugar levels include:

- Lack of concentration.
- Dizziness.
- Feeling hot and sweaty.
- Increased heart rate.

Low energy & binge eating

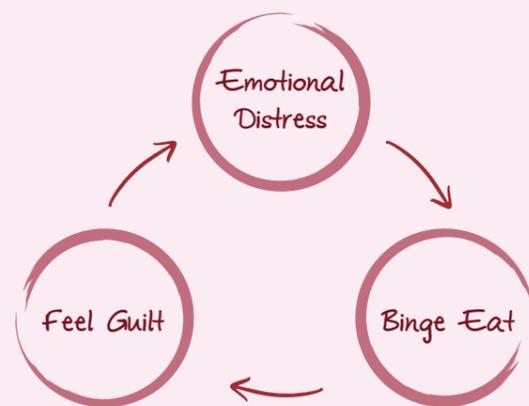
Without a consistent and sufficient food supply, there's a higher risk of overeating or binge eating. This is because your body is more likely to crave energy-dense foods to replenish its supply.

Can you recall a recent instance when you have skipped a meal?
What happened when you eventually ate?

When your body is hungry and craving energy-dense foods, the urge to eat can become quite powerful. Sometimes, you may consume large amounts of food and feel like you've lost control. This is known as binge eating.

The impact of binge eating

Losing control over your eating may not be solely due to physical hunger; it can also be a response to stress, anger, boredom, loneliness, or emotional distress. During binge episodes, people often turn to easily accessible and enjoyable foods, yet they may not even taste the food while losing control. This can lead to physical symptoms like tiredness and is often accompanied by feelings of guilt and shame, creating a sense of being trapped.



Compensating

Compensatory behaviors are actions that a person may take to alleviate the emotional distress resulting from a distressing eating episode. It's important to recognize that symptoms of disordered eating can vary from person to person, leading to a range of issues. Many individuals who experience distress related to food, weight, and shape may have a desire to compensate or 'make up' for something. Compensatory behaviors often stem from anxiety about potential consequences if they aren't undertaken and a desire for control. They may start as isolated events, such as exercising in response to food guilt, but can escalate into extreme compensatory behaviors over time.

Compensatory behaviors can occur for various reasons, such as a desire to control weight or shape. If you've ever engaged in compensatory behaviors, can you identify any specific reasons why you did this?

Facts:

- All forms of compensating can lead to dehydration which is a series of health risk.
- Self-induced vomiting can destroy your tooth enamel.
- Some compensatory behaviors can lead to bloating and bowel issues.
- Purging (from vomiting or laxative use) does not completely remove energy used. People can still absorb 40 - 75% of the energy consumed and often it can lead to eating more after the binge due to drops in blood sugar levels.

If you struggle with compensating behaviours, please ensure you are getting regular health checks. Further sessions will discuss ways to overcome and challenge these behaviours

Understanding the scales

If you've been attempting to control your weight, you likely have a complex relationship with weighing scales—a mix of love and hate. While it's not always possible to completely avoid the scales, becoming obsessed with the numbers can be counterproductive, as they can fluctuate for various reasons, including:

- Fluid intake.
- Clothing.
- Time of day.
- Food intake of the day and types of food (e.g., high sodium).
- Bowel and bladder movements.
- Hormonal changes.
- The scale's position, type, and even the condition of the batteries.

It's important to remember weight does not define health

This is why we are not focusing on weight, shape or size in these sessions. Therefore, it's important to set goals around your behaviours and challenges. Use below to set a reasonable goal for the duration of these sessions

What would I like to change about my relationship with food, weight and shape?

What specific goal would I like to set for myself based on above?

Top ten tips for enhancing your eating

- 1. Use an energy scale.**
- 2. Identify foods that sustain your energy.**
- 3. Recognize symptoms of low energy.**
- 4. Eat smaller, more frequent meals (See next session)**
- 5. Reflect on your diary weekly**
- 6. Set small, non-weight-related goals.**
- 7. Regular health checks are essential.**
- 8. Be mindful of compensatory behaviours.**
- 9. If you're obsessing over your weight, consider removing your scales.**
- 10. Practice being present and acknowledge emotions and guilt that may trigger a binge cycle**

Further Support

*If you need some more help after this session,
you can contact:*

Signposting:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well>

<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>

*Overeaters Anonymous Great Britain | For anyone
with eating issues
(oagb.org.uk)*

Local Support:

Together We

0808 196 1773

MindLine Cumbria

0300 561 0000

Meal Structure & Review

Week Start

M

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W

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F

S

S

Meal 1

Meal 2

Meal 3

Snack 1

Snack 2

Other Eating Episodes

What went well?

Challenges:

My positive quote:

Goal of the week:

Emotional Food Diary

Example Food Diary

When? Date/Time	Who were you with? What were you doing?	What did you eat?	Triggers identified	Thoughts/feelings prior to eating	B/L/P	Thoughts after event?

My Week in Review

What went well with my eating behaviours this week:

Any behaviours which need my attention:

What I will focus on next week:



together we

Cumbria

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