



Strategies For Managing Head Hunger

Overview

Review the difference between emotional, sensory and physiological hunger.

Identify barriers to managing head hunger.

Brainstorm strategies for dealing with these barriers and make an action plan.



Understanding why we eat



Physiological Hunger

Builds gradually.
Strikes below the neck.
Occurs a few hours after a meal.
Goes away when full.
Eating leads to a feeling of satisfaction.

Emotional & Sensory Hunger

Develops suddenly.
Strikes above the neck.
Unrelated to time.
Persists despite fullness.
Eating can lead to feelings of guilt and/or shame.

What Impacts These Types of Hunger?



Emotional Hunger

Hunger driven primarily by your emotional state and can sometimes be used as a coping mechanism to manage difficult emotions.

"I'm so stressed. I need chocolate."

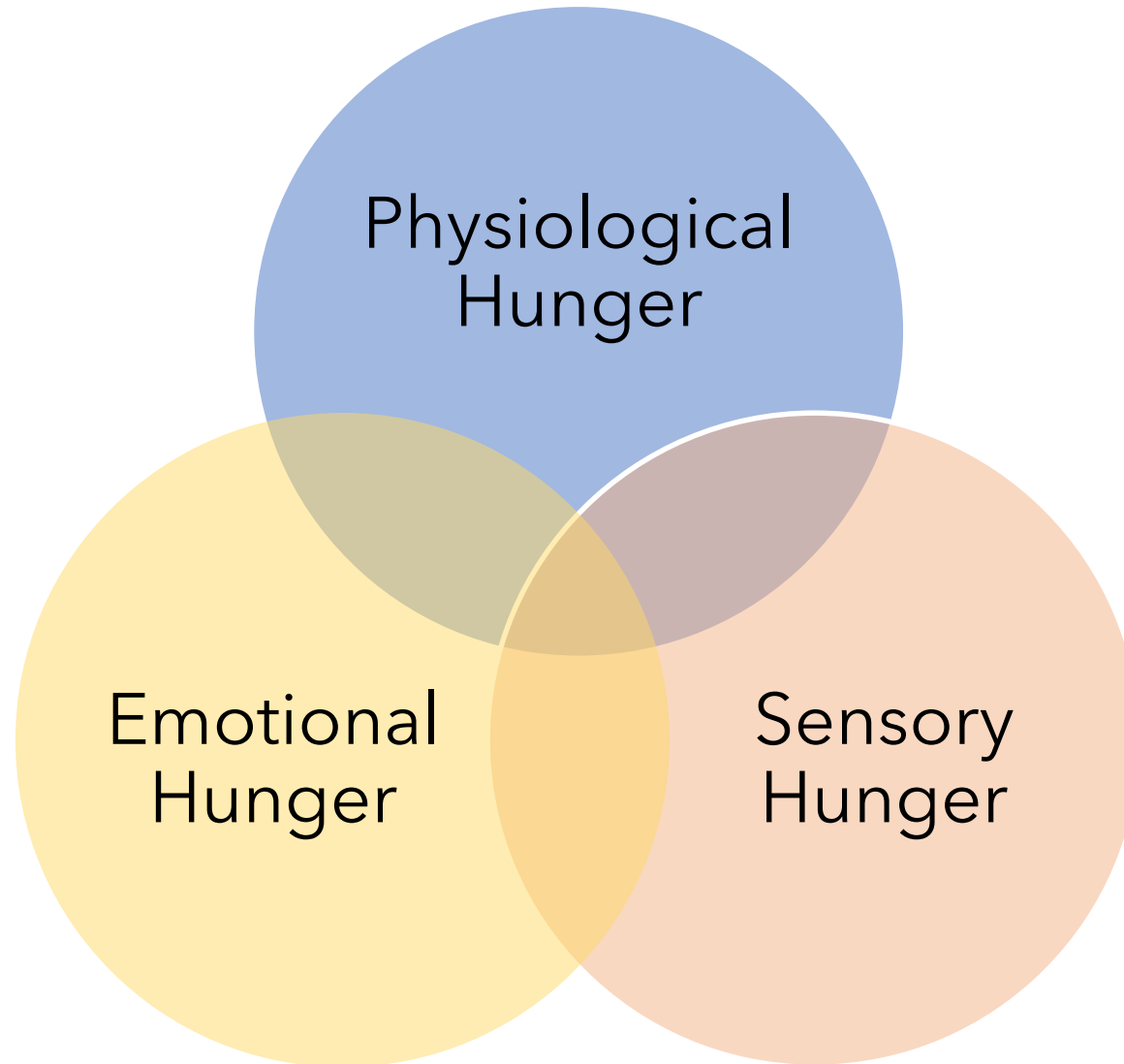


Sensory Hunger (Cravings)

A strong desire for foods with characteristics (i.e. tastes, textures, smells, etc.). Not necessarily related to emotions.

"I'm so full but I could really use something sweet."

The 3 types of hunger are not mutually exclusive





Key Tip: Always manage your physiological hunger

Starving

Empty

Satiated

Overfull

Stuffed



Food Cravings

“A strong, intense and often urgent desire for a particular type of food.”

(Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, n.d.)

What
contributes to
cravings?



Group Question

What contributes to food cravings?



Access to unhealthy food



Addictive qualities of junk food



Poorly managed physical hunger & glycemic control



Emotions & stress (e.g. boredom)



Advertising & exposure



Hormones



Lack of sleep



Our Goals:

1

To apply behavioural strategies to help build and maintain restraint.

2

To give into cravings less frequently so you can better meet your health goals.

Strategies for Managing Cravings

1. INCREASE SELF AWARENESS REGARDING CRAVINGS

2. MANAGE TRIGGERS

3. MANAGE CRAVINGS

Increasing Self Awareness of Cravings



What type of cravings do you experience?

Sweet?

Savoury?

Crunchy?

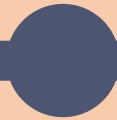
Chewy?

When do these cravings occur?

Morning

Afternoon

Evening



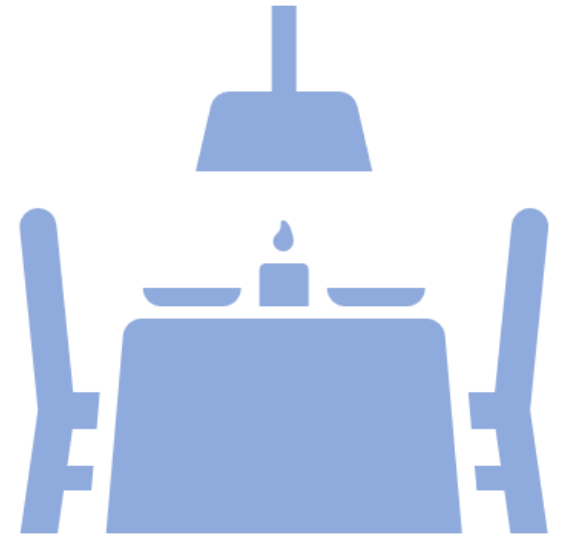
Where do these cravings occur?



Home?



Work?



Restaurants?

Do these cravings tend to occur...

A When you're alone?

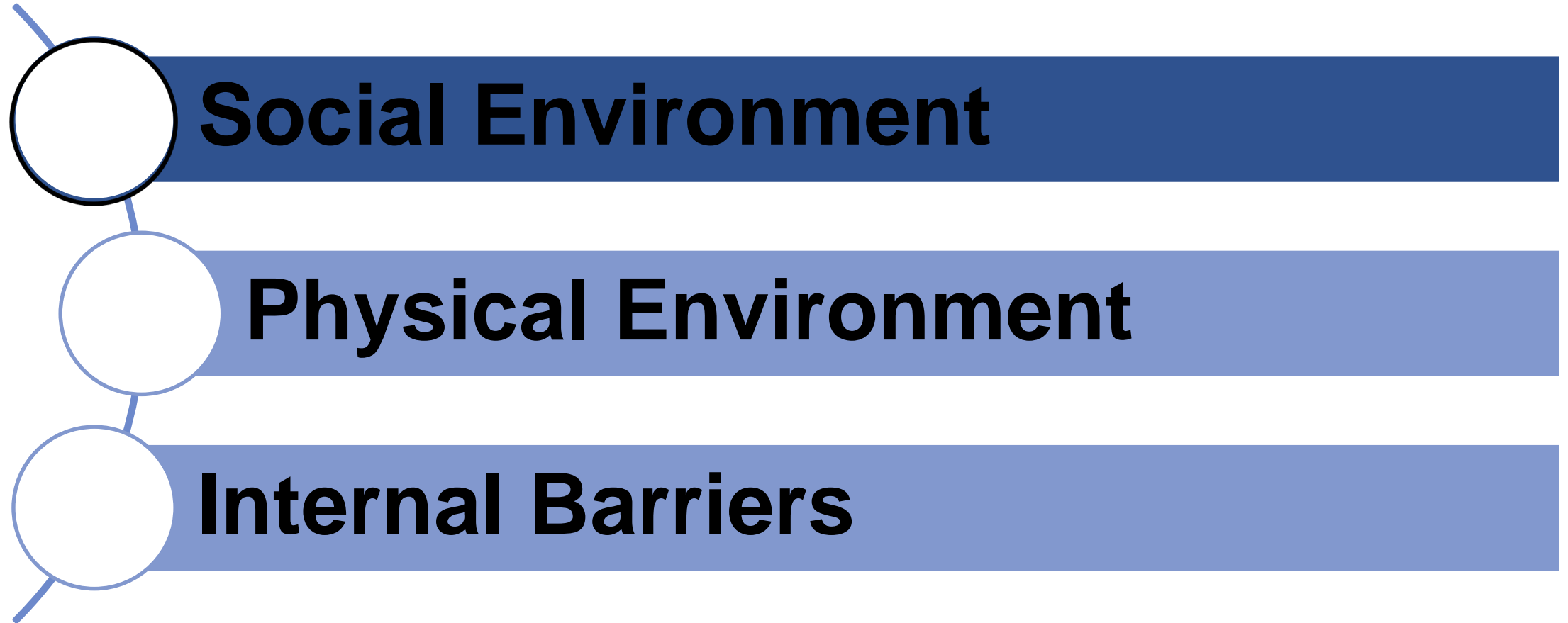
B When you're with others?

C Both?

Strategies For Managing Triggers



Triggers for Unhealthy Eating





Social Environment:

- 1) Identify high risk situations in advance
 - Could be around specific times of year.
(e.g.: holidays, birthday parties, anniversaries)
- 2) Plan ahead
 - Discuss with friends and family ahead of time.
 - Have a healthy option available if possible.
 - Stay on top of your physical hunger by following a structured meal plan the day of.
 - Have some go-to restaurants you can go to with your friends that serve some healthier options.



Social Environment:

3) Try to have some healthy options available at work:

- See if you can encourage your team members to bring healthy options to work to share (e.g.: salads and/or soups).
- Bring a healthy option yourself.
- Avoid time in the staff room if there are tempting treats.
- Try to have alternative strategies for managing stress going into work.



Changing The Environment

- 1) Keep unhealthy food out of the house if possible.
- 2) Go out for treats rather than bring them home if possible.
- 3) If family members are wanting to keep treats in the house, try to keep them in a cupboard out of sight.
- 4) Maybe you can compromise with your loved ones and see if they can avoid buying your favourite treats.
- 5) Change up your space so you're prompted do healthy behaviours.

Changing Your Routine



- Pick an activity in the evening that occupies your hands (e.g.: do a puzzle, reading, knitting, play a game, etc.).
- Plan an activity outside of the home (e.g.: going for a walk, meeting up with a friend, taking a class, volunteering).
- Try to limit screen time or amount of TV watched.
- Go to bed earlier.
- Take a bubble bath to unwind.
- Have tea with family members and chat about their day.
- Call and talk with friends.
- Write an email or letter to friends.
- Have a go-to procrastination list that you can work on when you're bored.



Healthy Coping Mechanisms:

- Journal or self-reflect/get curious:
 - Ask yourself what is causing the stress or underlying issue?
 - Is there anything you can do to help problem solve this issue?
 - What can you do to help take care of yourself through this difficult time?
- Take a bubble bath.
- Connect with a friend.
- Pray.
- Make a gratitude list.
- Try to find the silver lining in the adversity.
- Seek another perspective.
- Practice meditation.
- Use a diffuser to relax with a certain scent.



Healthy Coping Mechanisms:

- Connect with nature.
- Read an encouraging novel.
- Watch a funny show.
- Do something nice for someone else.
- Devote some time to working on what you can control (e.g.: focus on making healthy lifestyle choices).
- Throw yourself a dance party.
- Lip sync to your favourite song.
- Read through old encouraging cards and notes.
- Have a board of awesome (of your favourite things/ vision board etc).
- Do a hobby that you love.

Managing Cravings

Wait it out - try urge surfing.

Practice self-compassion if you have a slip or a lapse.

Mindfully indulge in a small portion of the desired food.

Have an alternative healthy food substitution.




Mindful Eating

- Planned
- Appropriately portioned
- Balanced meal composition
- Focused
- Savoured
- Aware of hunger cues



Mindless Eating

- Impulsive
- Not proportioned
- Imbalanced composition
- Distracted
- Rushed
- Unaware of hunger cues

- 
- Follow a structured eating pattern
Eat every 2-4 hours
- Balance your meals
- Self-monitor your food intake
- Pick foods that you enjoy

Nutrition Fundamentals

Healthy Meal Guidelines



1

300-500
calories
(depending on
which meal)

2

20-30g of
protein per
meal

3

Meal includes
a source of
fibre

4

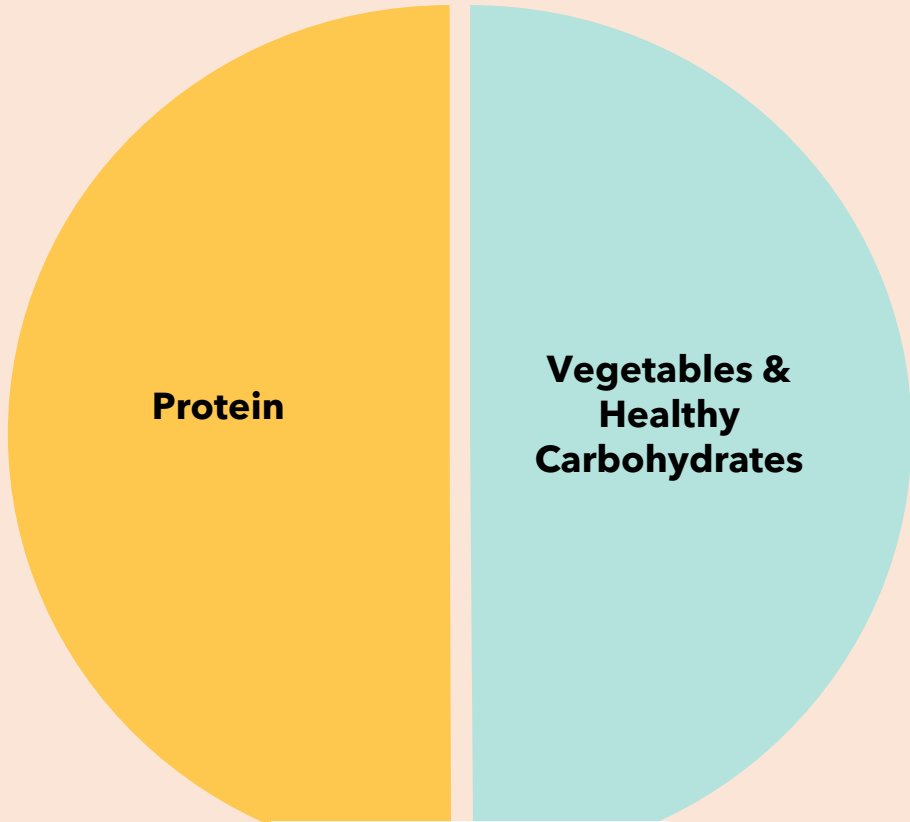
Meal includes
fruit and/or
vegetables

5

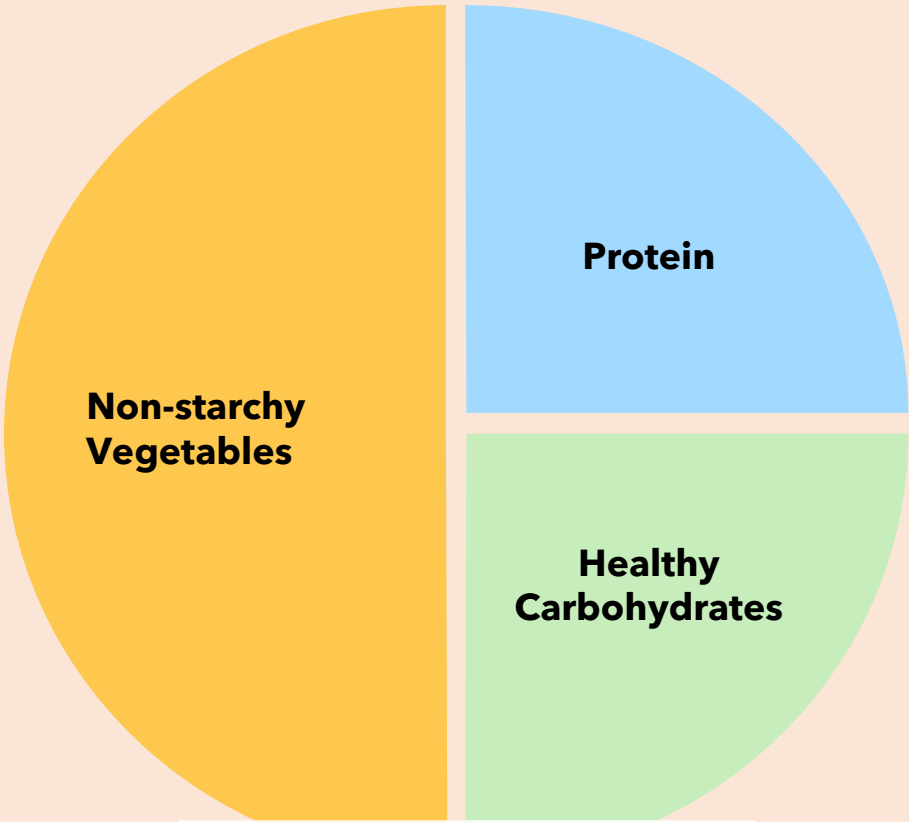
Meal tastes
good!



What is a Balanced Plate?



Breakfast



Lunch/Dinner

Take Homes:

There are several types of head hunger:

- Emotional hunger
- Sensory hunger

Identifying the factors contributing to our head hunger allows us to better manage it.

Trying out different strategies to manage head hunger is important to figure out which methods will work for you.

Additional Reading Related To This Topic:

