

Healthy Nutrition

Getting Back to Normal Eating

Returning to Normal Eating

The Holidays Can Disrupt Eating – and That Is Normal

After holidays, travel, celebrations, or schedule changes, many people notice:

- Eating past comfortable fullness
- More frequent snacking
- Eating for comfort, stress relief, or enjoyment
- Feeling “off” from usual hunger and fullness cues

This does not mean anything is “wrong.”

It means your body and routines are adjusting.

Holiday eating patterns are a response to an environment, emotions, and availability – not a lack of control.

→ What “Normal Eating” Really Means

Normal eating is flexible, not perfect.

Normal eating includes:

- Coming to meals hungry and eating until satisfied
- Choosing foods you enjoy and allowing yourself to eat enough
- Eating nutritious foods without rigid rules
- Sometimes eating for comfort, celebration, or emotion
- Sometimes eating past fullness – and sometimes wishing you had eaten more
- Trusting your body to regulate eating over time
- It is ok to make mistakes with eating

→ Normal eating varies with:

- Schedule
- Hunger
- Feelings
- Food availability

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Noticing Hunger, Satisfaction, and Fullness

After the holidays, cues may feel less clear at first. That is expected. (Cindra can offer eating exercises to help notice these feelings of internal cues—just ask.)

Helpful questions to gently reconnect:

- Am I eating because I am physically hungry, emotionally hungry, or both?
- Am I noticing enjoyment and satisfaction as I eat?
- When does the food stop tasting as good?
- What does “comfortably full” feel like in my body today?



There is no need to force eating less – awareness comes first.

Satisfaction Matters

When meals are rushed, restrictive, or “should-based,” satisfaction drops – and overeating becomes more likely later.

Support satisfaction by:

- Eating foods you actually enjoy
- Sitting down to eat when possible
- Allowing enough food to feel “done,” not deprived
- Letting meals feel emotionally and physically complete

Satisfaction helps regulate fullness over time.

Emotional Eating

Emotional eating is a normal human behavior, especially after busy or emotionally charged seasons.

You may notice eating related to:

- Stress or fatigue
- Sadness or let-down after events
- Joy, nostalgia, or comfort
- Boredom or lack of structure
- Holiday eating

Normal eating is not one meal or one day – it is a pattern over time.

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The goal is not to eliminate emotional eating, but to:

- Notice it without judgment
- Add other coping tools when needed
- Keep regular meals so emotions do not drive all eating

Predictable eating patterns support regulation.

Restriction can lead to mixed or unclear cues.

Gentle Ways to Re-Center After the Holidays

- Return to regular meals and snacks
- Eat enough earlier in the day
- Notice fullness cues without using them as rules
- Keep foods neutral – no “good” or “bad”
- Focus on patterns, not single eating moments

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REMEMBER! → Your body knows how to eat. Normal eating includes flexibility, emotion, satisfaction, and adjustment.

REMEMBER! → Returning to your rhythm happens through awareness, nourishment, and compassion – not control.