



The 8 Hungers

Why do you feel hungry?

Practice recognizing different kinds of hunger with your child. Keep track of what kind of hunger you or your child experienced right before a meal or snack. You can then look for patterns related to the kinds of foods you eat in response to different kinds of hunger.

The eight kinds of hungers are:



Eye hunger

“That sure looks good, I’m full but I still want to eat that.”
TV advertisers show delicious images of food because they know the power of eye hunger.



Ear hunger

“Hearing that bag opening makes me want some!”



Nose hunger

“That smell makes me want some, but it’s not even a meal time.”



Mouth hunger

“I want to eat something sweet! I want to eat something crunchy! I want to eat something cold!”
Mouths enjoy lots of different sensations such as taste, texture and temperature.



Stomach hunger

Growling, rumbling, empty or constricted feelings. Pay attention to hunger and fullness. Eat to about 80% full.



Cellular hunger

Thirst is the best example of cellular hunger.



Mind hunger

Mind hunger includes all of the thoughts we have about eating. Having rules about eating (forbidden foods, over-reliance on food labels, calorie counting, etc.) or judgements about food (good foods vs bad foods) are examples of mind hunger.



Heart hunger

Heart hunger involves eating to soothe emotions such as sadness, loneliness, boredom or even happiness.

To Learn More

- Child Wellness Clinic
206-987-2613, option 2
- Ask your child's
healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

Other factors

What else is a big factor for you? Pay attention. Check to see if your hunger is actually stomach hunger. If not, try to figure out what kind of hunger it is and satisfy that. Try alternative treats, drinking liquids, smelling food, eating small amounts of food with awareness, calling a friend, reading a book, going outside, a warm bath or giving love.

Other ideas to help

- Use smaller plates, bowls, serving and eating spoons.
- Cover your plate with different colors of food and include foods with different textures and temperatures.
- Keep serving dishes out of sight.
- It's OK to leave food on your plate and take it home or compost it.
- Take two thirds of what you think you want for first helpings.
- Choose balanced combinations of food including a source of complex carbohydrate, protein, heart healthy fat and fiber to help your stomach recognize fullness and stay satisfied for up to 3 hours. Eating satisfying combinations of food can reduce mindless grazing related to eye, ear, mouth, nose, heart and mind hunger.
- Pause after eating the amount and check different kinds of hunger again before you take seconds. It takes 5 to 10 minutes for our stomach to recognize fullness. A smaller helping or just a taste of seconds might satisfy enough.
- Put down your eating utensil between bites.

Used with permission from "Mindful Eating. A Guide to Rediscovering a Healthy and Joyful Relationship with Food". Jan Chozen Bays, MD. Shambala Publications.
2009.www.thecenterformindfuleating.org

Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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