

# Take the Fight out of Food!

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## Eating and Stress: Help! I eat when I'm stressed!



Samuel

Meet Samuel. He works full time while raising a family, and has a typical busy lifestyle. He's frustrated because he often makes poor food choices to cope with stress. He wants to find the right tools to deal with stress and negative emotions without relying on comfort food, so he tries the three-step approach:

### Spot the problem.

Samuel says "When I'm stressed at work or frustrated at home, I turn to food for comfort. I want to learn better eating habits."

### Get the facts.

Samuel calls a dietitian at his provincial dietitian contact centre. He learns that craving food when you feel stressed instead of hungry is called emotional eating. He recognizes some of his own patterns in the information the dietitian tells him, such as:

- Eating too much without realizing it
- Craving foods that are high in calories, fat and sugar
- Feeling even more stress and anxiety after eating too much

Samuel learns about mindful eating as a way to manage his eating habits. It involves paying attention to eating using all senses: really seeing, tasting, hearing, smelling and feeling food.



Dietitian Pro Tip

Amy Yiu  
RD

- Instead of turning to comfort food, fight stress by doing something you enjoy. Listen to music, take a walk, talk to a friend, exercise, cuddle your pet or read a book.
- Emotional hunger craves fatty foods or sugary snacks, such as chips or baked goods.
- Better choices are nutrient-dense foods that nourish our body and mind. Try fruit, yogurt, veggie sticks with hummus, nuts or whole grain crackers.

Find a dietitian in your area:  
[www.dietitians.ca/find](http://www.dietitians.ca/find)

### Try This!



Avocado and Grapefruit Winter Salad



Broccoli Lentil Salad with Tumeric Yogurt Dressing



Bean-Stuffed Cabbage Rolls



Egg, Tomato and Cheese Breakfast Pizzas

Find all 12 feature recipes at  
[www.NutritionMonth2017.ca](http://www.NutritionMonth2017.ca)



Track eating and activity on the go with **eaTracker**.  
Get inspired with recipe ideas from **Cookspiration**.



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## Get the facts (cont'd).

So instead of eating a whole bag of chips when he's stressed, he can learn to be more mindful of his choice – perhaps eat a smaller portion or choose a more nutritious snack. Mindful eating can help him become more aware of the reason why he's eating, so he eats when he's hungry and stops when he feels full.

Samuel learns that with the help of a dietitian, he can become more aware of his emotional and physical responses to food. With training, he can manage his stress-related eating and pay more attention in the present moment when he's making food choices.

## Seek support.

Samuel learns that many dietitians are coaches who offer mindful eating principles during individual or group counselling sessions. He decides to find a dietitian at [www.dietitians.ca/find](http://www.dietitians.ca/find) to help with stress reduction techniques and mindful eating.

## Take the Fight out of Food!

Eating should be joyful, not a source of everyday frustration and confusion. If you're fighting with food, try this three-step approach:

### 1. Spot the problem.

Define what's causing your fight with food first.

### 2. Get the facts.

Use facts from credible sources to decide what needs to be done to solve the problem.

### 3. Seek support.

Put the plan into action with support from a dietitian, family and friends.

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