

Take a NOURISH Step!

April: Connecting Stress Awareness to Emotional Overeating

Stress Awareness Month and *Emotional Overeating Awareness Month* share a profound connection, as stress often plays a pivotal role in driving emotional overeating. **Stress triggers the release of cortisol, a hormone that can heighten cravings for comfort foods high in sugar and fat.** Emotional eating becomes a coping mechanism for managing overwhelming feelings, creating a cycle that affects both mental and physical health. Raising awareness about stress management techniques—such as mindfulness, exercise, and social connection—aligns perfectly with efforts to address emotional overeating. By promoting healthier ways to handle stress, you can break free from this cycle. Check out the **Resources** on page 2.

April is Soy Food Month.

Incorporate soy foods easily by adding soy milk to drinks, tofu to stir-fries, edamame to salads, or tempeh to tacos. Snack on roasted soy nuts, try soy-based burgers, or use soy yogurt, cheese, or protein powder in your favorite recipes. Studies suggest eating soy protein instead of other types of protein can help slightly lower your total cholesterol and "bad" LDL cholesterol levels.

Emotional Eating NOURISH Steps Tips

Identify Triggers:

Write down when and why you eat to recognize patterns.

(Understand)

STOP & Seek

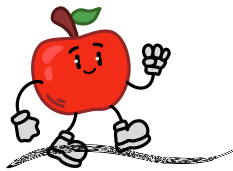
Solutions:

Once you identify the stressor, write down actions to resolve it.

Substitute Fruit &

Veggie sticks/strips instead of chips. Try Icelandic or Greek Yogurt instead of ice cream.

(Nutrient Rich)



April FUN Days!

4-5: Read a Road Map Day.

Share a story.

4-12: World Circus Day. *Share a memory.*

4-13: Scrabble Day *Play a game with a friend or on your own.*

4-30 Walk at Lunch Day

Take a walk before or after lunch, even if it is just a few moments, you'll feel better!

More at brownielocks.com

***NOURISH stands for: Nutrient-Rich Foods, Omega-3s & Healthy Fats, Understand, Recipes, Increase Protein & Fiber, Sugar & Sodium Awareness, and Hydrate.**

Mindful Eating Tips



Use a Baby Spoon & Take two bites:

Eat mindfully. Use a baby spoon when eating a treat and savor each tiny bite. Focus on the flavor, smell, and mouthfeel. Don't deprive yourself of your favorite dessert. Instead, take two bites. The first two bites usually have the most flavor. After that, you're just "eating."

Call a Friend or Write in a journal. You may find you are no longer craving the stress food once you get the stressor out of your head.

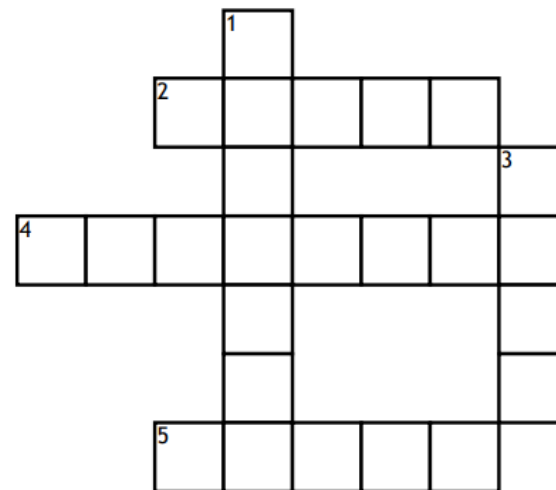
Brush Your Teeth: Brushing can help get the adrenaline out of your system.

To block a sweet craving, suck on a lemon wedge or sour pickle.

To block salty or spicy cravings, try gum or strong mint candy.



Keep Your Mind Busy



Across

- 2. A _____ can take your mind off your troubles.
- 4. Move to relieve stress.
- 5. Lack of this can increase stress.

Down

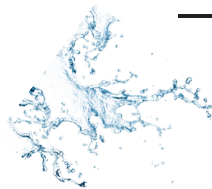
- 1. Where you can write to relieve stress.
- 3. Furry friends that provide comfort.



Puzzle created at Wordmint.com

Emotional Eating Resources:

- **Book: *Life is Hard, Food is Easy*** by Linda Spangle, RN, MA
<https://www.weightlossjoy.com/emotional-eating/>
- **Learn more about Emotional Eating at:**
<https://www.weightlossjoy.com/>
- **National Eating Disorders Association**
<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/get-help/>
- **National Alliance for Eating Disorders Helpline:**
1-866-662-1235 Monday-Friday, 8am-6pm CT



Stay Hydrated:

Sometimes thirst is mistaken for hunger; drink water or a hot comforting beverage like a flavored coffee or tea before reaching for a snack.

Answers to crossword:

1. Journal 2. Hobby 3. Pets 4. Exercise 5. Sleep

If you want more pep, take a NOURISH Step!

For more information visit: gwaar.org/nourishstep

GWAAR Nutrition Team Pam VanKampen, RDN, CD 4/25

