

Eating Behaviour

Being housebound during this isolation period can have a massive impact on eating behaviour. The thought of possible food shortages, coupled with boredom and stress are a cocktail for choosing comfort foods high in sugar, salt, fat and alcohol. There's a tendency to overeat or graze throughout the day. Let me be honest (none of us are immune), I've found myself opening a bottle of wine mid-week and dipping into the sweetie tin. Something that I'd not do ordinarily. Something's got to give before my trousers don't fit. Here's some tips to help us get through:

- 1) **Mindful eating only** - be aware of what you're eating and only eat when you're sat at the dinner table. Make a meal of it! Eating in front of the TV, computer or when your mind is distracted leads to overeating and grazing.
- 2) **Write it down** - create a structured meal plan with programmed mealtimes then stick to it. By writing down a plan or goal you are far more likely to adhere to it.
- 3) **Tune into physical cues** - snacks are not forbidden but should be eaten only if you're physically NOT emotionally hungry. Try to gauge hunger by physical cues such as stomach emptiness, ache or grumbling, energy dropping or lack of concentration.
- 4) **Don't wait till you're starving** - if you're physically hungry do not ignore it. If you wait till, you're overly hungry there is a greater likelihood that you will overeat.
- 5) **Ride the craving** - are biscuits or crisps in your cupboard talking to you and do you feel impelled to eat them even though you're not hungry? Cravings generally increase in force over a 20-minute period then crash and go away. If you can ride that wave you may be able to avoid giving in to your craving. Use distraction and delay tactics to get through.
- 6) **Keep busy** - having a daily structure or task list is a good way to keep busy and your mind occupied so that thoughts about food don't take over. You might want a detailed hour by hour structure or a casual 'to do' list. Either is fine so long as it helps to keep your mind busy.
- 7) **Diaries** - the act of writing down exactly what you're eating is a good way of reducing your intake. You can do this with pen and paper, or if you're a smart phone user you could use an app such as MyFitnessPal. A key tip is to log down what you're eating when you eat it. If you wait till later there's a tendency to forget to note things down and you're less likely to stop eating earlier.