

# Eating Self-Assessment

## Instructions

For each question, circle or check the answer that best describes you. Then count up how many responses you have from each column and write this number in the **TOTAL** row for that chart. When you have completed the charts for Parts A through F, use the Summary Chart to collect your totals for the entire assessment.

### Part A: Food Choices

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
I eat fried foods:	More than 3 times per week	1–3 times per week	Seldom
I consume these dairy products:	Whole milk or regular cheese	Low-fat milk and reduced fat cheese	Fat-free (skim) milk and fat-free cheese
I drink alcohol (1 drink = 12 ounces beer, 1½ ounces hard liquor, or 3 ounces wine):	More than 2 drinks per day	1–2 drinks per day or less	0 drinks per day
I often eat sweets, like candies, cakes, cookies, and pies:	I easily eat the equivalent of ½ pack of cookies or ½ gallon of ice cream in a day	More than 4 small cookies or equivalent a day	Less than 1–2 small cookies per day; I prefer fruit
I eat fatty foods such as bacon, sausage, and the skin of chicken:	At least once a day	3–5 times per week	Less than 3 times per week
I drink regular sodas or sugar-sweetened drinks (1 serving = 12-ounce can):	More than 1 serving per day	3–5 servings per week	Less than 3 servings per week
At a party, I would have a plate with:	Mini quiches, cheese, and chips	Swedish meatballs and crackers	Vegetables
<b>TOTAL:</b>			

## Part B: Portion Sizes

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
If the restaurant refills for free, I get it refilled (sodas, chips, bread, and other “refillables”):	Often	Sometimes	Never
I usually get large or extra-large servings:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I think a serving of steak is:	16 ounces	8 ounces	3 ounces
My idea of dessert is:	A half gallon of ice cream	A big bowl of ice cream	A tennis ball-sized scoop of ice cream
My serving of meat is usually the size of:	A steno pad	Two decks of cards	A deck of cards
I start my first serving already thinking of seconds and thirds:	Often	Sometimes	Never
If someone brings doughnuts to work, I usually have:	More than 2 doughnuts	1–2 doughnuts	0–1 doughnuts
<b>TOTAL:</b>			

## Part C: Eating Patterns

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
I skip breakfast:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I eat less than 3 times a day:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I make it a point to clean my plate:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I am usually the first to finish my meal:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I get very hungry and then eat until I am overfull:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I get so hungry I end up grabbing the first available thing I find:	Often	Sometimes	Never
Even if I am hungry, I don’t eat unless it’s mealtime:	Often	Sometimes	Never
<b>TOTAL:</b>			

## Part D: Awareness of Hunger

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
I eat while doing other things and find I have eaten more than I intended:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I clean my plate without thinking:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I can't tell when I am hungry:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I often find that I have eaten more than I intended just because food was there:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I never get hungry because I eat all the time:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I feel uncomfortably full after eating:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I eat for any reason but hunger:	Often	Sometimes	Never
<b>TOTAL:</b>			

## Part E: Emotional and Social Eating

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
I eat more when I am alone or I eat more when I am with others:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I wake up thinking about food and think about it most of the time:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I eat to deal with my feelings (stress, sadness, boredom, etc.):	Often	Sometimes	Never
I am the one to bring the food to work or parties. People look to me for that:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I eat for something to do:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I eat "at people" when they comment on my weight:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I don't have a care in the world when I'm eating:	Often	Sometimes	Never
<b>TOTAL:</b>			

## Part F: Environmental Cues

	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3</b>
If I see food sitting out, I am tempted to eat it:	Often	Sometimes	Never
Food ads send me straight to the kitchen:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I can't pass a bakery without getting a pastry:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I get distracted by the food table at parties:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I salivate when I drive past my favorite restaurants:	Often	Sometimes	Never
The more I'm served, the more I eat:	Often	Sometimes	Never
I snack without realizing it:	Often	Sometimes	Never
<b>TOTAL:</b>			

## Summary Chart

	<b>Totals for Option 1</b>	<b>Totals for Option 2</b>	<b>Totals for Option 3</b>
Part A: Food choices			
Part B: Portion sizes			
Part C: Eating patterns			
Part D: Awareness of hunger			
Part E: Emotional and social eating			
Part F: Environmental cues			

## Understanding Your Patterns and Setting Goals

Review the Summary Chart and notice the parts where you have many Option 1 answers. These indicate a big area for improvement. Checks in the middle column (Option 2) indicate a possible area for improvement. Read on for possible goals for your biggest problem areas, and write down goals for yourself.

### Part A: Food Choices

If you chose Option 1 most of the time in Part A: Food Choices, this indicates that part of your weight problem is due to eating high-calorie foods or drinks.

Possible goals:

- Keep a food journal, including calorie levels (you may also want to track fat, sugar, and protein levels).
- Start reading calorie levels on food labels and restaurant menus (ask the server if you can't find calorie information) and looking up calories in food.
- Use low-calorie condiments such as mustard, fat-free dressing, sugar-free jelly, and salsa instead of butter, jam, cream cheese, mayonnaise, and other high-fat condiments (see The "F" Word: Reducing Dietary Fat handout).
- Eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day (without creamy or cheese sauces and not fried).
- Fill half of your plate with vegetables and the other half with meat or protein and a healthy grain or starch, such as brown rice.
- Eliminate calorie-containing drinks, including alcohol. Liquid calories can add up fast, even after certain types of weight-loss surgery. One small soda (20 ounces) has 240 calories. A large soda can have over 500 calories—enough to gain one pound a week. A medium white chocolate mocha has about 500 calories. Be sure to read the label for calorie and sugar content of specialty waters as well. Some contain high amounts of sugar.
- Limit high-sugar foods (e.g., cookies, jellies, cakes, candy, ice cream, and so on).

## Part B: Portion Sizes

If you chose Option 1 most of the time in Part B: Portion Sizes, this indicates that part of your weight problem is due to eating large amounts of food. Weight-loss surgery will limit the amount you can eat. However, focusing on portion sizes now may help you lose weight before surgery. Also, awareness of portion sizes may become important in long-term weight management.

Possible goals:

- Keep a food journal, including portion sizes and calories in those portions.
- Weigh and measure your portions. Compare to standard portion sizes.
- Use smaller plates, cups, and bowls.
- Chew each bite 20 times to slow down eating.
- Order small or medium servings instead of large. If you're still hungry, add a vegetable or fruit.
- Avoid buffets and "all you can eat" restaurants.
- Avoid going back for second helpings.
- Get small portions of foods, including small-sized prepackaged portions.

## Part C: Eating Patterns

If you chose Option 1 most of the time in Part C: Eating Patterns, this indicates that part of your weight problem is due to skipping meals, which may make you vulnerable to poor food choices or overeating.

Possible goals:

- Keep a food journal, including meal times and your hunger levels. Look for patterns.
- Eat breakfast (a protein drink or a protein bar is a quick option).
- Eat three nutritious meals a day and include protein and produce or whole grains at each meal. Don't go longer than 4 to 5 hours without eating.
- Keep healthy snacks available in case you get hungry between meals.
- Buy quick, low-calorie frozen meals for the week. Make sure they include a protein and a vegetable.
- Set an alarm on your cell phone or computer to remind you to eat.
- Develop a menu plan that will work with your lifestyle.

## Part D: Awareness of Hunger

If you chose Option 1 most of the time in Part D: Awareness of Hunger, this indicates that part of your weight problem is due to not being able to notice or identify physical hunger for food.

Possible goals:

- Keep a food journal, including meal times and your hunger levels.
- Before you eat, close your eyes and think about why you are eating. Notice the feeling in your body. Notice how you feel after each bite. Take time to eat, and stop eating not when your plate is empty, but when you start to feel satisfied (or no longer feel hungry).

## Part E: Emotional and Social Eating

If you chose Option 1 most of the time in Part E: Emotional and Social Eating, this indicates that part of your weight problem is due to using food as a coping strategy or to deal with social situations.

Possible goals:

- Keep a food journal, including foods eaten and your emotional state before and after eating. Also, track triggering thoughts and events for emotions.
- Take an assertiveness training class.
- Keep a journal.
- Learn and practice relaxation techniques including how to prioritize and break down tasks.
- Have a list of friends you can call and discuss whatever is going on.
- Consider a program that deals with emotional eating, such as Overeaters Anonymous.
- Take a walk to raise your “feel good” brain chemistry.
- Seek counseling.
- Make a list of activities other than eating that help you cope with emotions.

## Part F: Environmental Cues

If you chose Option 1 most of the time in Part F: Environmental Cues, this indicates that part of your weight problem is due to sensitivity to sights and smells of food.

Possible goals:

- Keep a food journal, including events that trigger eating.
- Take side roads so you do not see the restaurants that tempt you.
- Leave the room or turn the volume down during commercials.
- Ask family, friends, and coworkers not to bring you unhealthy snacks or treats.