

Hunger Scale

Did you know that appetite and hunger are not the same?

Hunger is a feeling in your body, a need to eat. Did you ever skip a meal because you were having too much fun playing with your friends? Did you feel your stomach growling and you needed to eat real quick? That was hunger.

Appetite is not a need to eat. Have you ever been angry or sad and all of a sudden having a bowl of ice cream or some candy sounds like a good idea? And you may eat the ice cream or candy even though you are not hungry—that is you appetite calling you!

It is important to learn the difference between your appetite and hunger so you learn to eat when you are hungry.



1. Extremely hungry, hunger pangs
2. Very hungry
3. Stomach growling, beginning to feel hungry
4. Mildly hungry
5. Not very hungry, but not full
6. Satisfied and comfortable
7. Beginning to feel full
8. Starting to feel very full
9. Uncomfortably full, stomach ache from food
10. Painfully full, need to lie down

When you use the hunger scale, ask yourself how you feel each time you want to eat something. If your hunger is “4” or higher, try to find something else to do. Have a drink of water, sometimes we think we are hungry, but we are really thirsty. Wait until you are “3” or lower to eat.

While eating pay attention to your hunger, too. Try to stay between a “3” and “6” on the hunger scale and you won’t be eating more food than you need.