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5 things you didn't know about psychological eating

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Rhonda Fine, a clinical sexologist and psychiatric nurse practitioner at Miami Institute for Age Management and Intervention, shares her thoughts on the topic:



JOE RAEDLE / GETTY IMAGES

1Too much food: People generally eat beyond what their bodies need. More than two-thirds of U.S. adults are either overweight or obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The extra weight puts them at risk for heart disease, erectile dysfunction, diabetes and other conditions.

2Two hungers: There are two types of hunger, physical and psychological. Physical hunger is the body's request for a certain amount of good, healthy food. This hunger builds gradually and after eating it goes away. Psychological hunger is the mind saying, "I want that."

3No satisfaction: Psychological hunger emanates from the same system associated with other forms of abuse -- excessive gambling, illegal drug use, addictions. It's a response to a trigger, even if the subject ate five minutes ago. It can build rapidly and there will be no real sense of satisfaction after eating. Instead, there will be guilt and shame. ("We never repent of having eaten too little" -- Thomas Jefferson)

4Bad choices: Diets attempt to change what we eat, and exercise improves stamina, but the decisions made in regards to food is what keep the majority of the population fat. People make bad food choices for cultural and social reasons. Some just don't know better, some eat because they're sad or lonely and some have always viewed food as a reward. Also, there are women who believe, "If I'm heavy, I don't have to have a boyfriend."

5Healthy attitude: There's a strong correlation between a good attitude and good eating. Those who really want to change their eating habits will accomplish it. Others, you tell them they have to walk 45 minutes on the treadmill to offset one Coke and they're in shock. You have to restructure your thinking and habits to fit your goals.

• For more information, visit www.miami-institute.com.

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