

# Today's Special: Emotional Eating Tips To Keep Comfort Eating In Check

By Marcie Gorman

People respond to emotional stress in a variety of ways. Some turn to comfort eating which is not necessarily a problem unless it sets up a pattern that results in weight gain. How do you keep that from happening?

**You must approach stress eating in a very real way with coping strategies that provide comfort and needed emotional support.** Awareness that certain events or feelings are triggering the desire to eat is your first defense to avoiding unnecessary weight gain. Unfortunately, our culture portrays good food as a status symbol, waiting lusciously for us at the end of a hard day as an earned privilege and the balance between eating well, but right is difficult. Rather than preaching abstinence from comfort foods, finding alternatives that satisfy cravings is one option to consider.

It's hard to deny a food craving, which is why low-fat substitutes must be equally satisfying. Identify the characteristics in the foods that are comforting to you—is it sweet, salty, or crunchy? Then, match these with lower calorie versions that will gratify the craving without the consequences of weight gain.

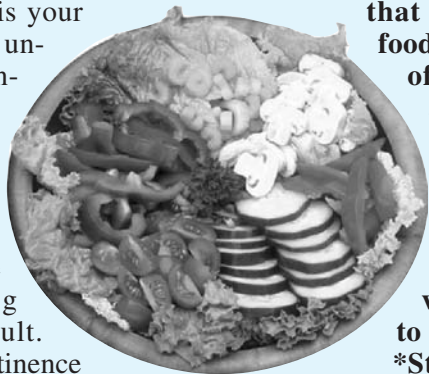
For example, if the urge is for cheesecake driven by its creamy, rich texture, then this may be satisfied with a sweet and creamy alternative such as low-fat pudding served with fat-free, non-dairy whipped topping. A craving for crunchy foods like tortilla chips can be indulged instead with a low-fat choice of baked crackers or even raw vegetables jazzed up with salsa, which is also low in fat and total calories.

Of course food alone won't make problems disappear, which is why it is important to find effective ways to deal successfully with difficult feelings and situations in ways that don't rely on food. Situations, not hunger, trigger a stress eater's desire to overeat

their favorite comfort foods. While you don't have to give up foods that make you feel better, you do need to break the pattern of out-of-control eating early. Other ideas include:

**\*Interrupting the patterning by getting up and taking a walk, running errands, or getting back to a project or hobby, etc.**

**\*Knowing what situations or feelings trigger your desire to overeat and establishing new responses that do not require food. Keeping track of times, places and other details pertinent to the urge to eat will help you determine the cause and a viable solution to deal with it.**



**\*Staying connected. The loneliness from "handling it on your own" can compound your stress, so call a friend. Not only might other people's ideas be just the help you need, but the value of being listened to can help validate fears and give perspective that can help alleviate the burden that drives us to distraction and in search of comfort.**

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Marcie Gorman is President and CEO of Weight Watchers of Palm Beach County, Inc., the area from Boca Raton to Titusville.

Weight Watchers is America's trusted name in weight loss and the global leader in weight-loss services, with approximately 46,000 weekly meetings in 30 countries. Weight Watchers' mission is to help people reach and maintain a healthy weight. At the heart of Weight Watchers are weekly meetings which provide the coaching and tools to help people make the positive changes required to lose weight and keep it off. Weight Watchers also offers two subscription products for people wanting to follow Weight Watchers online. To learn more, call 1-800-651-6000 or log on to the Weight Watchers of Palm Beach County, Inc website at [www.wwpbc.com](http://www.wwpbc.com).

# Hard Cider—Wine of Ireland

Hard cider has often been called the "wine of Ireland" because the cider-making process has more similarities to wine than beer. Similar to grapes, apples are reduced to a pulp and the juices are extracted by pressing. Once filtered, the apple juice is placed in oak vats for fermentation for eight weeks. The cider then matures over several months.

## Some Cider Facts

- Cider is one of the oldest and most natural beverages.
- During the 14<sup>th</sup> century, children were baptized in cider—it was cleaner than water (and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, part of the farm laborer's wage was paid in cider.) By the year 1800, cider was said to be "the" cure for stomach upset, rheumatic disease and various other diseases.
- Research has also shown that ciders contain the same amount of healthy antioxidants as in wine.

## \*Cider Apples

Cider is so popular in Ireland because apples grow particularly well

there, flourishing in both the northern and southern counties. Magners is made from juice derived from 17 varieties of apples. The apples, grown in Clonmel since 1935, are specifically chosen for cider production, and are unique and quite different from dessert or culinary apples. While dessert apples are sweet and culinary apples acidic, cider requires the bitterness of tannin to balance the

flavor and help preserve it. In Ireland, 78 million liters of hard cider are consumed annually, and 83% of that is crafted with Magners' recipe. Magners is the largest cider maker in Ireland and the most popular hard cider in the U.S.

"Cider-making is a craft which has evolved through the centuries and traditional cider-making skills are still used today," said an executive at Magners. "The very same presses used to make Magners 50 years ago are still used, accounting for the consistency of the quality. The result—an amber-colored hard cider, slightly effervescent that is dry & refreshing."



Chew gum while cooking or baking, and you'll be less likely to sample your creations. But don't chew it when you are with other people...not very attractive.

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