



Sensible health and wellness  
concepts for employees



## Your Health: Is Stress on the Menu?



We all deal with stress differently. Some people choose to burn off this nervous energy by attending a hot yoga class or grabbing a few minutes to journal their thoughts. Others may turn to coping behaviors they would rather avoid, like having one too many alcoholic beverages or finishing a pint (or gallon) of ice cream in one sitting. [Medical News Today](#) defines emotional eating as “a pattern of eating where people use food to help them deal with stressful situations.” While emotional eating is a

common experience, it can become problematic when it becomes the primary way you deal with stress. While all humans eat for nutrition and sustenance, research shows that women are more likely to engage in stress eating than men.

The first step in solving any problem is to [identify the source](#). Emotional hunger differs from physical hunger in several ways. These questions can help you identify whether you are feeling hunger or an urge to “stress eat.”

### **How do you know you are hungry?**

Physical hunger starts in your stomach – you may even “hear it” demand its next meal with a low grumbling! Emotional hunger, on the other hand, starts in your head. It may stem from an uncomfortable feeling or thought, whether that be an emotional reaction to an event or out of boredom. Stress eating tends to come on suddenly rather than a slow build. Pay attention to where your desire to eat is coming from so you can choose your next step.

### **What types of food are you craving?**

The type of food you are seeking is a good sign of the type of hunger you are feeling. If you are confronted with a stressful situation, your body responds with an uptick in your cortisol levels. This increase may result in increased cravings for sugary or salty foods. Emotional hunger often craves something specific, usually junk food. Physical hunger can be satisfied with a variety of foods.



## What are you doing while you eat?

Mindless eating takes place when you are focused on an activity and have invited a snack along for the ride. For example, you are munching on a bag of chips while watching a movie. The potential complication here is you are likely not paying attention to how much you are consuming. A better practice is to set time aside to eat, removing distractions and other tasks at hand. Prepare a serving of your favorite snack or a healthy meal and give your full attention to your food.

Since we are so often on the go, finishing one task and heading out to accomplish another, it can feel odd to take time out to identify the root of your hunger. With a closer look, you may realize that instead of being hungry you were thirsty or are feeling lonely. Perhaps grabbing a glass of water or calling a friend would be a more appropriate solution. Creating a bit of space in your thoughts can provide you an opportunity to evaluate whether you are hungry or distracting yourself with food. Nutrition is important! Consult a doctor to discuss any concerning behavior with food.

This newsletter contains general health and financial wellness information and is not a substitute for your doctor's care. You should consult an appropriate health care professional for your specific needs. Some treatments mentioned in this newsletter may not be covered by your health plan. Please refer to your benefit plan documents for information about coverage.

## Spicy Tuna Poke Bowl Makes 2 servings

*Spicy Tuna Poke Bowls made with chunks of fresh tuna, avocado, cucumbers, spicy mayo, scallions cut on the bias served on a bed of steamed rice – YES please!*

### INGREDIENTS

½ pound sushi grade tuna, cut into 1/2-inch cubes  
¼ cup sliced scallions  
2 tablespoons reduced sodium soy sauce or gluten-free tamari  
1 teaspoon sesame oil  
½ teaspoon sriracha  
2 tablespoons light mayonnaise  
2 teaspoons sriracha sauce  
1 cup cooked short grain brown rice or sushi white rice  
1 cup cucumbers, (from 2 Persian) peeled and diced ½-inch cubes  
½ medium Hass avocado, (3 ounces) sliced  
2 scallions, sliced for garnish  
1 teaspoon black sesame seeds  
Reduced sodium soy or gluten-free tamari, for serving (optional)  
Sriracha, for serving (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a small bowl combine the mayonnaise and sriracha, thin with a little water to drizzle.
2. In a medium bowl, combine tuna with scallions, soy sauce, sesame oil and sriracha. Gently toss to combine and set aside while you prepare the bowls.
3. In 2 bowls, layer half the rice, half the tuna, avocado, cucumber and scallions.
4. Drizzle with spicy mayo and sesame seeds and serve with extra soy sauce on the side, if desired.



### NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Calories: 397  
Fat: 14.5g  
Saturated Fat: 2g  
Protein: 32.5g  
Carbohydrates: 33.5g  
Sodium: 864.5mg  
Fiber: 6g

**Prep Time:** 10 minutes

**Total Time:** 15 minutes