

Mood & food: *the close link*

You may already know that your diet can change how you feel mentally. If you've ever been really hungry, you may notice that you start to feel upset or angry. And, some high-calorie junk foods are called "comfort foods" for a reason. They make you feel better mentally, but only for a little while.



WHY WE WANT COMFORT FOOD

Stress can make you want to eat unhealthy foods. This is your body's way of trying to get fuel when it thinks you are in trouble. Although this is normal, you have the power to overcome it.

Take a moment to think about a food you are craving. Then think about your current emotions. If you're feeling sad, angry or stressed, this could be why you want that pizza or ice cream.

If you eat the food, you may feel good for a few minutes. But unhealthy foods with lots of fat and sugar can actually increase the risk of depression or anxiety. This creates an unhealthy cycle that will continue as you eat those comfort foods.

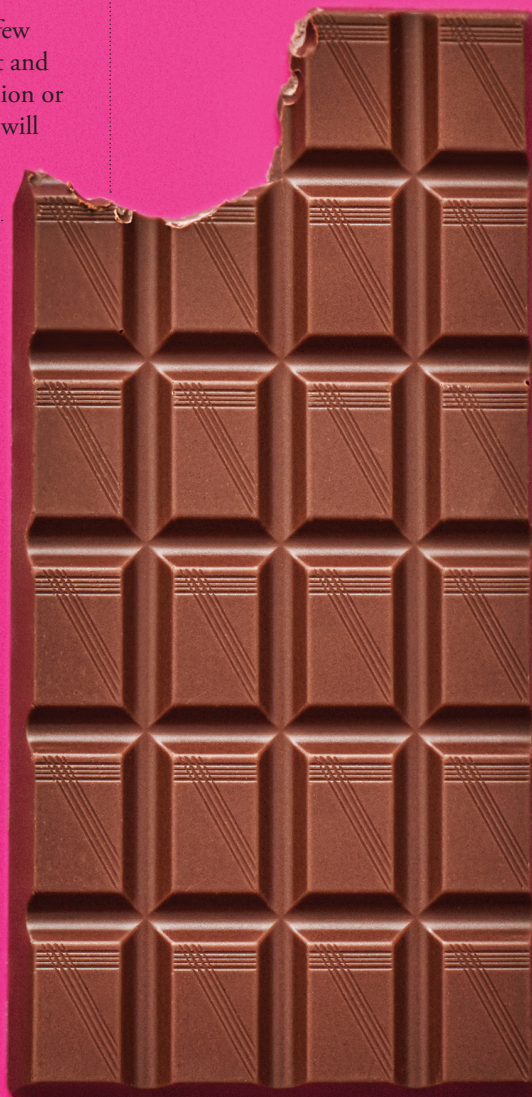
YOU CAN WIN!

The link between the mind and what a person eats is complex. That's why it can be so hard to make good choices when you have a bad day or feel depressed. But there are ways to fight this habit and start to make better choices, even when your mood is down or you feel stressed.

You're not stuck in this cycle. Eating fruits and vegetables can make you feel happy. When you're happy, you're more likely to reach for healthy foods again. This can start a positive cycle!

THE CYCLE OF MOOD & FOOD

If you use food to cope with stress or depression for too long, your body will get used to it. Then, when you do try to make a healthy choice, your body and mind may be confused. This could lead to an even stronger craving for those comfort foods. This cycle makes it very hard to make changes to your diet.



Source: American Heart Association