



Healthy foods are good choices for between-meal snacks. But emotional eating can sometimes lead people astray from good health, says a K-State nutritionist.

K-State nutritionist: Find positive ways to deal with emotional eating

Publication outlines tips on how to avoid eating traps during stressful times

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MANHATTAN, Kan. – There is a reason that certain foods are called “comfort foods.”

“There is a strong relationship between your mood and what you choose to eat or do not choose to eat,” said Kansas State University nutritionist Tanda Kidd.

Eating can be associated with good times – think of celebrating a wedding or birthday. But in times of stress or anxiety, food is often used to eliminate undesirable feelings, which leads to uncontrolled – and unhealthy -- eating.

“There is nothing wrong with eating a snack to make you feel better,” Kidd said. “But when food is used as a way to avoid or escape certain emotions, it can become easier to not deal with the real issue at hand.”

Kidd has published a fact sheet in the educational series, *Kansans Move into Health*, providing guidance on avoiding the traps of negative emotional eating. The publication, titled [The Ups and Downs of Emotional Eating](#), is available online for free from the [K-State Research and Extension bookstore](#).

In it, Kidd outlines differences between eating for physical hunger and emotional hunger. She then offers some alternative responses to emotional eating:

- Call an old friend to catch up.
- Take a walk, or relax and listen to uplifting music.
- Play a board game with kids.
- Take some “me” time – do whatever it is that you love.
- Curl up with a good book or favorite movie.
- Exercise.

More ideas for healthy eating are available from K-State’s Department of Food, Nutrition, Dietetics and Health.

K-State Research and Extension has compiled numerous publications and other information to help people take care of themselves and others during times of crisis. See the [complete list of resources online](#).

Local K-State Research and Extension agents are still on the job during this time of closures and confinement. They, too, are practicing social distancing. Email is the best way to reach them, but call forwarding and voicemail allow for closed local offices to be reached by phone as well (some responses could be delayed). To find out how to reach your local agents, visit the K-State Research and Extension [county and district directory](#).