Hunger vs. Appetite

Learn the difference to better control your weight.

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Babies are born with a built-in sensor that prompts them to cry when hungry and stop when fed. But in adults, this internal mechanism often fails and people continue eating even when they're not hungry. "Babies instinctively eat in a way that is designed to make them feel nourished, satisfied and content," says Cynthia Sass, RD, a nutritionist and author of the book Cinch! Conquer Cravings, Drop Pounds and Lose Inches. That's how adults should eat too. Sass's approach to behavior modification stops clients from overeating and helps them stay healthy.

Sass's one tip to help clients reconnect with their bodies is a very simple approach. She suggests clients allow themselves to feel mild to moderate hunger about four times a day during a one-week period. The reason? To develop "an appropriate pattern of hunger and fullness," Sass says. This natural way of eating only when you're hungry is what effectively helps shed the pounds. Go ahead, why not channel your inner child.

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