

I'M SORRY, I WAS HUNGRY!

MOODY, CRANKY, HUNGRY, TIRED?
FIGHTING THE FOOD SWINGS?

It begins with a low hunger pang deep within the stomach. Soon lethargy sets in. Some people suffer headaches; others feel dizzy. But of all the unpleasant symptoms of hunger, it affects not only the person who is famished, but also unsuspecting co-workers, friends and lovers too.

Countless adults admit to being irritable, even hostile, when they are hungry.

"I'm sorry, I was hungry" has become a culturally acceptable way to apologize

for brusque behavior. One of my clients, Eileen who works in a high-powered legal firm says she relies on the "forgive me I'm hungry" response. "Once I identified those symptoms," she said, "I was able to say, "I'm really hungry right now and I'm sorry. Just give me half an hour and I'll be fine."

A new vernacular has evolved around this behavior, with the afflicted, referring to their nasty moods as "food swings".

Nutrition scientist, Dr. Saltzman, of the United States Department of Agriculture's nutrition Research Center at Tufts University in Boston, says the increasing awareness of hunger's sullen side effects may be in part a byproduct of society's growing obsession with food and dieting. Talking about it, the hungry and crabby speak up and even warn friends and colleagues to steer clear. It gives them a chance to cope without resorting to cursing, weeping or assaulting a candy machine.

Also, food swings may be harder to conquer if they are based not on physical hunger but on "emotional hunger," which is triggered by stress, sadness, depression or even boredom. Emotional hunger is harder to satisfy, because you can eat and overeat and still not feel satiated."

Women sometimes feel that if their bellies bulge the tiniest bit beyond flatness, they ate too much. And, sadly, some women believe that if they feel full, then they “haven’t been good.”

Much depends on what we eat and when. A diet rich in protein, fat and fiber will help stave off hunger, states Dr. Mark Friedman, an associate director of the Monell Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia which conducts research on taste and smell. Your sensitivity to your external environment increases. That may be why, he said, someone playing music in the apartment below may be more irritating when you are hungry than when you’re not.

Do you spend your afternoons feeling cranky, tired and hungry? Well, your lunch could be the culprit! Nutritionists say eating the right foods can help you feel good all day long. So, here’s what to eat if you’ve got a case of the afternoon crankies..... First: If you’re always tired after lunch.....Cut out ‘white carbs.’ White carbohydrates – like bread, rice, and potatoes – only cause a temporary spike in your blood sugar. That means you will feel good for about an hour, then your energy levels will come crashing down. What’s the fix? Switch to whole grains – like wheat bread or whole wheat pasta. Katzen says your body breaks whole grains down slowly, which keeps your blood sugar – and your energy levels – stable until dinnertime.

Fighting food swings by eating small amounts throughout the day is a good idea if the food is healthy. Keep healthy snacks like string cheese, pretzels, fruit, and trail mix in your purse or desk drawer. If you have late dinner reservations, have a small snack beforehand.

Next: If you’re hungry again an hour after lunch.....Fill up on fruits and veggies. The fiber in fruits and veggies makes you feel fuller longer.....And you won’t make a beeline for the vending machine

right after lunch. So, replace your chips with a bag of baby carrots, or add a banana to your peanut butter sandwich.

You should also try drinking a glass of water the next time you're hungry. Katzen says a lot of people mistake dehydration for hunger, so head to the water cooler instead of the vending machine the next time you're hungry right after lunch.....

And finally: If you can't focus in the afternoon.....Eat some protein with your lunch. Research shows that eating high-protein foods can make you feel more alert. Why? Because eating protein raises your body's level of the chemical dopamine – which makes you feel energized. So, try to have a serving of protein with your lunch to prevent a mid-afternoon slump – good choices are beans, nuts, or lean chicken.