

MIND • BODY • FOOD

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Hunger Isn't Just a Rumbling Stomach

Your body's version of hunger may not look like somebody else's.

Physical hunger can show up in many ways. Some people notice an empty stomach, while others first experience low energy, irritability, poor concentration, shakiness, headaches, nausea or increased thoughts about food.

Space to Breathe Therapy

Understanding the bigger picture

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Points to hold in mind

- Interoception influences how clearly and when internal signals are noticed.
- Stress, medication, neurodivergence and eating history can change the experience of hunger.
- Earlier signals may be cognitive, emotional or physical rather than stomach-based.

A balanced perspective

Food and eating are influenced by biology, psychology, relationships, culture, access and the environment. Useful guidance makes room for the whole person rather than reducing experience to one rule.

Questions for personal reflection

Use these prompts gently. You do not need to answer them all, and there is no correct response. They can be explored privately or with a trusted professional or supporter.

My earliest possible hunger signs

Signs that appear when hunger is stronger

Thoughts or mood changes

What helps me respond earlier

A food or drink that is manageable

Taking the idea forward

Notice without judgement

Observe what happens across more than one occasion before drawing conclusions.

Keep needs individual

Respect allergies, intolerances, sensory preferences, culture, access, health conditions and medical advice.

Choose achievable support

Small changes to availability, preparation, routine or support may be more useful than a complete overhaul.

Ask when unsure

A GP, registered dietitian or suitable specialist can help when symptoms, restriction or health needs are complex.

Important context

Severe shakiness, fainting or other acute symptoms may require medical attention, especially with diabetes or relevant medication.