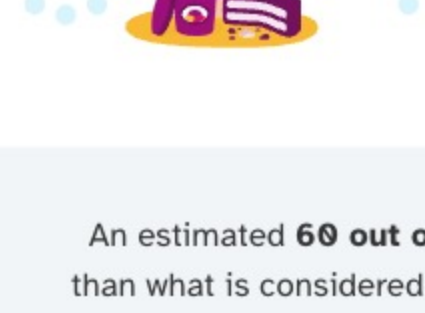


Emotional Eating

POWERED BY 23ANDME RESEARCH

Emotional eating is defined as eating to cope with difficult feelings despite not being physically hungry. Emotional eating is very common, but genetics can make some people especially prone to frequent emotional eating.



Jamie, your genetic result is associated with an **increased likelihood** of frequent emotional eating.

An estimated **60 out of 100** people with genetics like yours report frequent emotional eating. This is higher than what is considered typical, which can be anywhere from 20 to 48 out of 100 people. This result takes into account your birth sex and genetic ancestry.



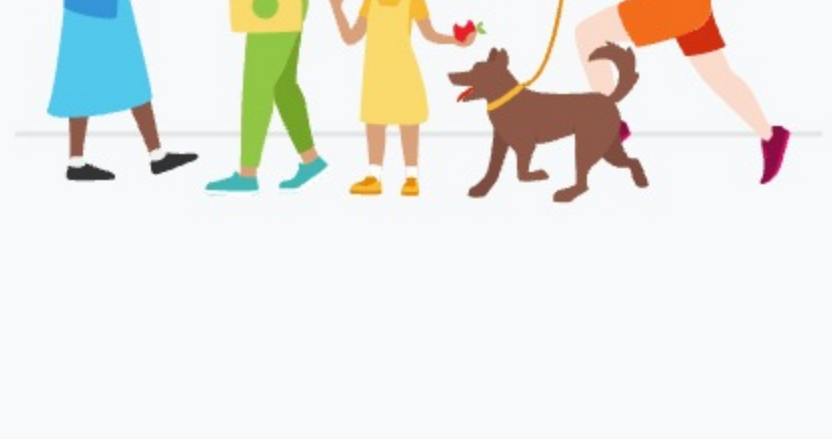
60 out of 100 experience emotional eating frequently
40 out of 100 experience emotional eating occasionally or never

This estimate is based on currently available data and may be updated over time.

Ways to take action

Most people experience emotional eating from time to time with no impact on their health and well-being. But if emotional eating happens too frequently or becomes problematic, it can be helpful to try new strategies and address the root causes.

- Learn to recognize emotional hunger. Unlike physical hunger, emotional hunger tends to come on suddenly with cravings for comfort food.
- Remove hard-to-resist unhealthy foods from wherever you keep them and replace them with healthy alternatives.
- Try to maintain a balanced approach to eating, and include your favorite foods occasionally, which can be tempting.
- Find an enjoyable alternative, like going on a walk, doing a hobby, or talking to a friend.
- Try to manage your emotional triggers, such as stress and boredom, using mindfulness or other approaches.



In addition, seek social support from friends and family. If emotional eating is hard to control or is a symptom of an eating disorder, seek out counseling, which can be an important part of treatment.

If you have concerns about an eating disorder, know you are not alone and help is out here. Learn more about help resources from the [National Eating Disorders Association](#).

[Learn more about emotional eating from the Mayo Clinic](#)

More about emotional eating

What is emotional eating?

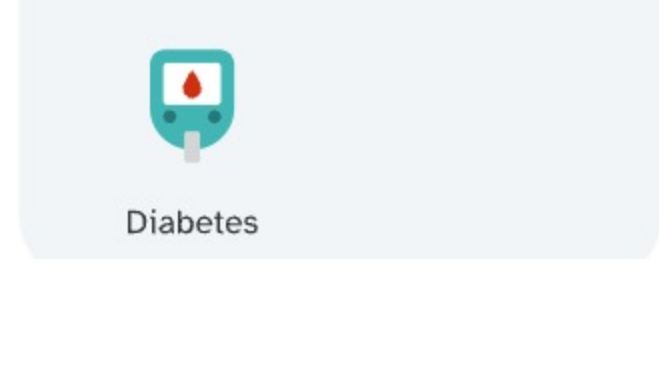
Food and emotions are often closely linked, such as having cake to celebrate a happy occasion or a favorite childhood meal that brings up warm feelings. Emotional eating often involves eating high-calorie, unhealthy foods, despite not feeling physically hungry, and can result in overeating. Emotional hunger is not satiated by food in the same way that physical hunger is, so while emotional eating may feel good in the moment, it can cause physical discomfort and feelings of guilt or shame.



It's not fully understood why some people are more prone to emotional eating, although these individuals may have an inverted stress response that causes an increase in appetite and a physical craving for unhealthy hard-to-resist foods. It's also not clear whether emotional eating causes more weight gain in some people compared to others, and how this may interact with other factors that can impact weight, such as [how your body processes saturated fat](#) and your [genetic weight predisposition](#).

When emotional eating becomes a problem

Many people experience emotional eating from time to time, but when emotional eating becomes extreme or too frequent, it can become a problem. Because emotional eating typically leads to overeating, especially of high-calorie, unhealthy foods, it can cause weight gain or inhibit weight loss, and can contribute to health problems like high cholesterol and diabetes. In extreme cases, emotional eating can also be a symptom of eating disorders, such as binge eating disorder or bulimia nervosa. While a healthy lifestyle is the main intervention for emotional eating, emotional eating under control.



Other factors that can contribute to emotional eating

Besides genetics, many other factors can contribute to occasional or frequent emotional eating, including:

- Stress
- Female birth sex, including hormone levels during the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle
- Dieting or other food restriction
- Mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Negative life experiences, such as experiencing racial discrimination or childhood trauma



Keep in mind

This report **does not diagnose eating disorders**. Consult with a **healthcare professional** if you are concerned about whether you may have a problem with emotional eating, have a personal history of disordered eating, or before making any major lifestyle changes.

- If you have already received care for an eating disorder from a healthcare professional, it is important to **continue any management plan** that is recommended.
- This report has not been validated for individuals of certain ancestries, including some people with ancestry from multiple continents.

- This report **does not account for every possible factor** that could impact your likelihood of experiencing emotional eating. Non-genetic and other genetic factors, such as epigenetics, with
- This report is based on a genetic model **created using data from 23andMe research participants**. It has not been clinically validated and should not be used to make medical decisions.

How we got your result

Methods

This report is based on a statistical model called a polygenic score that takes into account your genetic results at many genetic markers, along with your genetic ancestry and the birth sex you reported in your account settings, to estimate the likelihood of frequent emotional eating. We used data from 23andMe research participants to calculate this estimate. We may update results and estimates over time as the model, available data, or scientific understanding about this condition improves.

About the result

People whose result is associated with odds of experiencing frequent emotional eating that are at least 1.5 times higher than average are considered to have an increased likelihood. These results are based on many genetic markers, and random test error at one or more of these markers can lead to a small margin of error in your estimated likelihood of frequent emotional eating. For people whose estimates are near the boundary between typical and increased likelihood, this margin of error may introduce some uncertainty about whether their estimated likelihood is considered "typical" or "increased." Your genetic result is associated with an increased likelihood based on the available genetic markers used to calculate your result, there is a less than 1% chance your genetic likelihood estimate could fall on the other side of the boundary and be in the range that is considered typical.

Scientific validity across ancestries

We verified that the model meets our scientific standards for individuals with predominantly East/Southeast Asian, European, Hispanic/Latino, Northern African/Central & Western Asian (Middle Eastern), South Asian, and Sub-Saharan Sèè our [white paper](#) to learn more about the science behind this report.

Change log

- September 2024: Emotional Eating report created.

Read more:

[Calderón-Asenjo RE et al. \(2022\). "Association Between Emotional Eating, Sociodemographic Characteristics, Birth Sex, Sleep Duration, and Mental and Physical Health in Young Adults." J Multidiscip Healthc. 15:2845-2859.](#)

[Cleveland Clinic Health Essentials. "What Is Emotional Eating?" Retrieved July 25, 2024, from https://health.clevelandclinic.org/emotional-eating.](#)

[Dakanalis A et al. \(2023\). "The Association of Emotional Eating with Overweight/Obesity, Depression, Anxiety/Stress, and Dietary Patterns: A Review of the Current Clinical Evidence." Nutrients. 15\(5\).](#)

[Fuente González CE et al. \(2022\). "Relationship between Emotional Eating, Consumption of Hyperpalatable Energy-Dense Foods, and Indicators of Nutritional Status: A Systematic Review." J Obes. 2022:4243868.](#)

[Hoggard LS et al. \(2019\). "The role of emotional eating in the links between racial discrimination and physical and mental health." J Behav Med. 42\(6\):1091-1103.](#)

[Klump KL et al. \(2013\). "The interactive effects of estrogen and progesterone on changes in emotional eating across the menstrual cycle." J Abnorm Psychol. 122\(1\):131-7.](#)

[Konttinen H et al. \(2019\). "Depression, emotional eating and long-term weight changes: a population-based prospective study." Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act. 16\(1\):28.](#)

[Mayo Clinic Health System. "Feeding your feelings." Retrieved July 25, 2024, from https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/feeding-your-feelings.](#)

[Sominsky L et al. \(2014\). "Eating behavior and stress: a pathway to obesity." Front Psychol. 5:434.](#)

[van Strien T. \(2018\). "Causes of Emotional Eating and Matched Treatment of Obesity." Curr Diab Rep. 18\(6\):35.](#)

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