Stop Binge Eating—Now!

by

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Introduction

Congratulations! You’ve just taken the first step in the process of helping yourself out of the binge eating prison you have been trapped in for years or even decades. It takes a lot of courage to look this, or any, disorder in the face and make a commitment to recover. We hope that within this e-book you will find understanding, compassion, guidance, and, most of all, hope. Please take comfort in the fact that you are not alone.

We take our stewardship of BingeEating.com very seriously and strive to offer everyone who visits our website the very best information, community, and support to assist people like you in the process of gaining control over food and your life. Having been there ourselves, we know exactly how you feel. We are not a boot camp. We are not a diet. We are not a fad. We are here to bring you cutting-edge information and support for a disorder that is causing immense
pain worldwide.

You’ve already taken the first step by seeking out help. This e-book is intended to give you an understanding of BED and walk you through the process of recovery. We want you to live a happy and fulfilled life, free from the physical and emotional chains of binge eating, and we can help you achieve this goal.

**My Story**

It all started with caffeine....

I remember working in restaurants and bars to pay my way through college, and as the bartender, all the employees had to come through me to get their drinks. I started to notice a strange phenomena: it didn’t matter if it was the 16 year old busboy or the 60 year old cook—the folks that drank the most caffeine developed dark circles under their eyes. And it was
relative as to amount. The people with the largest habits had the darkest circles under their eyes.

That awareness began a lifetime of personal exploration into the substances we put into our bodies. It led to my personal recovery from alcohol and drug addiction (another book—currently in the works), sugar, flour, and wheat dependency, and even a few more.

Even though I never developed a weight issue, I used flour and sugar just like I used drugs. When I got clean from alcohol and drugs, I turned to these sweet products and comfort foods to fill the emptiness inside me which had nothing to do with physical hunger. I remember eating 7,000-10,000 or more calories in one sitting almost every night. I “passed out” on the couch, was left feeling tired, groggy, and foggy the next day, and I hid and hoarded food all the time, afraid of running out of my “stash.” Early in my recovery I started to notice that caffeine and sugar were present at a lot of the support groups. Every meeting and every event was a sugar and caffeine smorgasboard. And then I noticed that all the new folks started to pack on what is commonly called in college “the freshman 15.”
Addiction professionals will tell you about “substituting one drug for another,” and it seemed very obvious to me that everyone was substituting sugar and caffeine for their drugs of choice. The obvious also happened, and that is the freshman 15 got much larger for many, many folks. When I would talk about sugar, flour, wheat, and caffeine, people took to calling me the “weird addiction” specialist.

As my recovery advanced, I eventually quit caffeine and then sugar and then flour and wheat much in the way I describe here in the book. The only difference was, even though I was surrounded by addiction-savvy people, my journey was pretty much alone.

The one thing that cemented my beliefs in this subject was the pregnancy of my wife and the birth of my children—identical twin boys. By some miracle my wife had bought into my beliefs and vowed with me not to eat sugar, flour, or wheat or ingest caffeine during the pregnancy. Then we raised the boys without these substances for the first six years of their lives. After that, about once a month, we would
allow them to eat it at other people’s birthdays but never at home. Yes, it was crazy hard convincing and educating family members, school officials, and babysitters, but I believe with all my heart that it created much healthier children.
I believe that one day, in the advancement of human history, 200 years from now we will look back and say things like “Did you know they used to give sugar to children?” Much like we say now “Did you know they used to put cocaine in Coca cola?” If you want to read all about the science behind it, check out Dr. Lustig’s YouTube video, Sugar: The Bitter Truth or his book Fat Chance.

For most of history people have come together as a community or tribe to pass on information and provide support in order to tackle things that we “know” but can’t seem to “do” without help. This e-book and BingeEating.com serve to continue that tradition. I hope you’ll join us so that we can help each other to change your life and the lives of the millions of people affected by this terrible disease: binge eating and sugar/flour/wheat addiction.

**It’s Official: the DMS-5 Definition of Binge Eating**

Binge Eating Disorder (BED) is defined by the American Psychiatric Association as being characterized by:
“...episodes of binge eating in which [the person] consume[s] very large quantities of food in a brief period and feel out of control during the binge. Unlike people with bulimia nervosa, they do not try to get rid of the food by inducing vomiting or by using other unsafe practices such as fasting or laxative abuse. The binge eating is chronic and can lead to serious health complications, particularly severe obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease.”

BED is now an official diagnosis in the DSM-5 (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*), the guide that psychiatrists and psychologists use to define and diagnose illnesses. Added in May 2013, this is the official “rule book” for the industry and the inclusion of BED is important because it puts everyone
on the same page, so to speak, when diagnosing and treating BED.

It took over two decades and 1,000 published research papers, but BED is now considered a valid and legitimate disorder. Because of this official recognition, many insurance and health care providers now offer coverage for the treatment of BED. This is wonderful news!

BED is the most common eating disorder in the U.S., affecting 3.5% of adult women, 2% of men and up to 1.6% of adolescents. We think the actual numbers are much higher, but let’s stick with the professionals’ numbers. It affects African-Americans and Caucasians equally and the disorder seems to be both physical and psychiatric.

Not everyone who is obese has BED, but a common affliction for those with BED is obesity (2/3 of people with BED are obese), as well as high levels of anxiety and depression that can last a lifetime.
Is This You? Common Scenarios of the Binge Eater

Though related, binge eating is not just overeating, having cravings now and again, indulging in dessert during the holidays or on special occasions, or eating too much when you are hungry.

The typical binge eater is very similar to the alcoholic in that once she’s had the first “drink” (cookie, donut, chip, etc.) she spirals out of control and can’t stop until the whole thing is gone. She may sneak into the kitchen in the middle of the night to devour an entire carton of ice cream while standing up in the light of the refrigerator. She is usually plotting out her next rendezvous with her food of choice, including which store or café she will stop at to stock up. She may turn down invites from people, go home early to seek comfort in a bag of
cookies, or feel resentful of people who can stop eating after one piece, handful, or bite.

This cycle repeats itself again and again, with vicious bouts of guilt, self-hatred, despair, and hopelessness. The binge eater may or may not promise herself that this time will really be the last time, but because of her powerlessness over this condition, it never is—even as she gains weight, suffers from health problems, or damages relationships.

Binge eating is compulsive and it’s emotional.

**Checklist For Binge Eating Disorder**

Everyone occasionally overeats—especially during the holidays, when they’re under stress, or in social situations. But consuming large quantities of food or being overweight does not necessarily make you a binge eater.

Professionals agree that in order to be diagnosed as a binge eater, a person has to exhibit the symptoms listed below at least once a week for more than three months:
1. Overwhelming feelings that you cannot control what you are eating or how much you are eating
2. Recurring incidents of eating very large amounts of food in one sitting
3. Eating much faster than you normally would (in front of other people)
4. Eating to the point where you are uncomfortably full
5. Eating an excessive amount of food even though you don’t feel hungry physically
6. Recurring incidents of eating alone due to embarrassment at the amount of food you are eating
7. Overwhelming feelings of shame, guilt, disgust or depression because of what you have just done
8. Massive variations in your weight
9. Low or no self-esteem
10. Noticeable decrease in sexual energy/desire
11. The desire to try various diets

If any of these symptoms apply to you, please do not feel bad. Awareness is the first step to finding a solution to any problem in life. The fact that you are reading this e-book shows that you are a smart individual who cares enough about yourself to take responsibility for and seek positive change in your life. You are much more than merely a group
of symptoms, so go easy on yourself as you continue reading this book. Compassion for yourself is just as important as courage; in fact, they are synonymous.

To better assess if you qualify for this disorder, take the binge eating quiz [here](https://example.com/quiz).

**The Lies That Binge Eaters Tell Themselves**

Like anyone suffering from a disorder over which they have no control, people with BED have a constant script that runs through their head on a loop that criticizes, scolds, and
humiliates them. That inner voice causes them to binge eat just to shut it up, but that moment of relief is fleeting—and the pleasure in eating usually has more to do with quieting the internal monologue than the food itself. Most, if not all, of what this inner critic is telling you is a big pack of lies.

Here are the most common lies that binge eaters tell themselves:

- Binge eating will make me feel better.
- This is the last time.
- Since I can hide it from other people, it’s not really a big deal.
• As long as I only binge eat on the weekends, it’s not out of control.
• I just did XYZ—I deserve to celebrate!
• I’ll start that diet/exercise program tomorrow.
• I’ll exercise for two hours to compensate for the box of donuts I just ate.
• I am only loveable at a certain weight/nobody loves me/I’m completely unlovable.
• If I can’t have a perfect relationship with food then it’s not worth even trying.
• Since I don’t binge eat all the time, my eating disorder isn’t really that bad.
• I just need to have stronger will power.
• Something is very wrong with me.
• I’m a failure.
• I have a successful career, so this means that I don’t have a real problem.

The Long-Term Risks of Binge Eating

Many people over-satiate themselves now and again—we all know that uncomfortable feeling of eating too much—but regularly doing this long-term puts you at risk for health
problems. According to the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA), some of the physical consequences of binge eating are:

- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- heart disease
- type 2 diabetes
- gallbladder disease
- sleep apnea or insomnia
- edema
- kidney disease
- degenerative arthritis
- infertility
- some types of cancer
- irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- fibromyalgia

The good news is that the sooner you get help, the better your chances of recovery.
Easy Does It...But Do It

As you read this e-book, I want you to be kind to yourself. We find that binge eaters are remarkably hard on themselves. Really hard. In fact, downright mean. One thing we have found, time and time again, is that "beating yourself up" (yes, a medical term) is of absolutely no help. Look at it this way: if beating yourself up worked, you’d be A-OK right now.

The thing to keep in mind is that you didn't get here in one day and you won't walk out of here tomorrow. But if you make a personal commitment to caring for yourself first and foremost, then you stand a much better chance of recovering than if you constantly berate yourself.

Beating yourself up stops today.
Binge Eaters Are Extremely Hard on Themselves

People who suffer from BED tend to be unusually hard on themselves. This is not only very destructive, but may in fact have been a catalyst for this symptomatic behavior in the first place. Self-care is just as important as discipline—maybe even more so—because you won’t overcome any disorder if you can’t care for and about yourself in every way.

Later in this e-book we will be instructing you to do small, kind things for yourself. At first they will seem ridiculous (you might even feel like that Saturday Night Live character Stuart Smalley!). But here’s the key: do them anyway. Self-care is the core, the very foundation, of helping yourself walk through and out of this hell and it can not be underestimated. Just as your destructive behavior developed over time, you’ll need to be patient as you practice being kind to yourself.

We can’t stress enough that BED is a grave disorder and needs to be taken seriously. What follows is a comprehensive plan to change behavior that could kill you. It’s that serious. This plan may sound daunting or frightening, but countless others have faced the same challenge and been victorious.
You can do it, too! You’ll have to do the work, and it won’t always be easy, but it is possible and it is imperative for your health—physically and emotionally.

You’ve already cleared the first hurdle by reading this e-book so far, so give yourself a pat on the back for that. As far as we’re concerned, you are already beginning to triumph over your disorder.
**Why Beating Yourself Up Doesn’t Work**

“God, you’re so stupid!”

“What a big, fat loser you are.”

“You never do anything right.”

“Do you know how grotesque you look right now?”

“No wonder no one loves you.”

Do these phrases sound terrible to you? Of course they do! And yet we say them to ourselves all the time. If our friends treated us the way we treat ourselves, chances are we would walk away from them. So the next time you berate yourself, listen to the words your inner critic is saying and then imagine saying the exact same thing to your best friend. Isn’t that a heartbreaking image? In many cases, it would even be considered verbal abuse.

So why are we so willing to treat ourselves this way?
Believe it or not, this inner critic is just doing what it believes is necessary to protect us and ensure that we are safe. It comes down to basic survival skills in the face of danger—or in many cases, perceived danger. The biological “fight or flight” response that we feel when threatened (whether the threat is real or imaginary) is designed to ignore the pain, danger or risk of death and do what is necessary to motivate us into surviving at any costs.

But just as beating someone else up, physically or emotionally, never works, beating ourselves up is also futile. Let me repeat this very important concept: *if beating yourself up actually worked, you’d have stopped binge eating years ago.*

Beating yourself up never works.
Contrary Action: Being Easy on Yourself

So if beating ourselves up isn’t the answer, what is? Simple: loving ourselves. Having compassion for ourselves. Understanding that we have simply been doing the best that we could given the circumstances—and by circumstances, we mean not fully comprehending the severity of our disorder and not having a place to seek help.

Contrary action is any action that is, quite simply, different from what you’d normally do. The idea behind this concept is that you have been making decisions from the part of your mind that is unhealthy, so if you want to make healthy choices, you can’t rely on this part of your mind. You must allow your mind to make its default choice, and then do the opposite. And yes, it will feel unnatural and uncomfortable and wrong. At first. But eventually, as you get used to this new dynamic,
making healthy choices will become second nature to you and feel more comfortable.

The first contrary action we are going to ask you to perform is to be easy on yourself. Give yourself some slack. Be proud that you have sought help. Take a deep breath.

**Being Easy on Yourself Isn’t a Free Pass To Not Do the Work**

Many people cannot fathom being easy on themselves because doing so feels like they’re not taking their situation seriously. They’re afraid that they or, more importantly, others will assume that they are condoning their binge eating.

So let’s be clear here. Being easy on yourself isn’t a free pass. It doesn’t mean that you don’t take this disorder seriously. It doesn’t mean that you get to avoid doing the work. It doesn’t mean you condone your behavior and invite more of the same into your life.
Being easy on yourself just means that you are human, you deserve to be loved, and you get to practice compassion for this vastly serious disorder from which you are suffering.

**Awareness, Acceptance, Action**

Chances are, if you have tried to stop binge eating and were unsuccessful at it, it’s because you attempted to jump straight to the solution. You may have thrown out all the tempting food in your kitchen. You likely went on a diet. You might have even tried socializing only with people for whom food wasn’t a problem. You bribed yourself with a reward if you managed to not binge eat for a week.

But before you even think about the solution, you must be truly and fully aware of the problem. Otherwise you’re just in denial, and being in denial makes you susceptible to being sucked back into the problem again. Being fully aware of the issue means understanding how you came to binge eat in the first place, what’s going on at a deeper level (binge eating is not really about food), and truly grasping the consequences of your disorder.
Only when we’ve become sincerely aware of our situation can we move on to acceptance. This concept is often a difficult one to embrace because, as we mentioned earlier, most people mistake accepting a situation for condoning it. Let’s clear this up right now. To condone is to approve of something that is considered wrong and allow it to continue. To accept something is simply to agree with reality. All we’re asking you to do is to agree with reality, which may sound something like: “I am a binge eater” or “I have an unhealthy relationship to food.”

Once we’re aware of our problem and accept that we have this problem, only then can we effectively take the actions necessary to solve the problem.

Acceptance Always Precedes Change

A final word on acceptance. It is a fundamental truth that acceptance always precedes change. Being able to accept yourself, your struggles, your past, your emotions, and your setbacks—not
to mention your successes, your future, your self-worth, and your happiness—is the key that unlocks the door to recovery. Stop fighting yourself. Stop fighting reality. Accept and love yourself just the way you are, even when it seems ridiculous, uncomfortable, and counter-intuitive. In fact, especially when it seems ridiculous, uncomfortable, and counter-intuitive.

**Always Check with Your Doctor First**

Before starting any physical change (diet, exercise), always check with your doctor first to ensure that any existing or potential health problems aren’t triggered. The Mayo Clinic suggests checking with your doctor if any of the following apply:

- You have heart disease.
- You have asthma or lung disease.
- You have diabetes or kidney disease.
- You have arthritis.
Addiction and Craving and Willpower, Oh My!

We at BingeEating.com believe that BED is a biochemical dependency that cannot be controlled by willpower alone. Goodness knows we have all tried! But food addiction is very similar to drug addiction. Just like opiates lead to chemical addictions in the brain, ingesting sugar, flour, and wheat in all its forms triggers our bodies to crave more.

Biochemical means characterized by, produced by, or involving chemical reactions in living organisms such as the brain. Those who suffer from BED experience physical
cravings, mental obsession, and a distortion of basic instincts and will.

There is a lot of scientific proof related to these cravings, but since we’re trying to keep this e-book short and sweet (if you’ll pardon the pun), we’re going to focus more on solutions you can implement to overcome these cravings. And, yes, you can overcome them!

**Addiction: No One Wants To Admit To This Ugly Word**

Before we move on, we need to stop and address a simple yet powerful word: addiction. When you think of an addict, chances are you picture someone hooked on heroin or crack, needle punctures up and down their arms, living in squalor or maybe on the streets, selling anything (including their body) to get that next hit.

With this idea of the addict, it’s easy to see why no one would want to admit to being one themselves. But addiction covers a much greater spectrum of addictive substances and behaviors. According to the American Society of Addiction Medicine:
Addiction is characterized by inability to consistently abstain, impairment in behavioral control, craving, diminished recognition of significant problems with one’s behaviors and interpersonal relationships, and a dysfunctional emotional response. Like other chronic diseases, addiction often involves cycles of relapse and remission. Without treatment or engagement in recovery activities, addiction is progressive and can result in disability or premature death.

You can be addicted to food, alcohol, drugs, people, work, exercise, sex, gambling, shopping, social media—and so on. In short, addiction simply refers to a behavior over which you have no control.
The Power of Sugar, Flour, and Wheat

Did you know that flour turns to sugar in your stomach? That’s why sugar and flour (and wheat, which is ground to make flour) are pretty much the same when it comes to cravings. Sugar does not just contribute to weight gain; its effects go much deeper than that.

Sugar, flour, and wheat are very powerful psychoactive drugs that wreak havoc on the body and alter how we feel and behave—in the same way that more “powerful” drugs like alcohol and cocaine do. The problem is that people never tie together the idea of sugar, flour, and wheat being “psychoactive.” They just can’t seem to put them in the same category with drugs. Even though we’ve all experienced the “sugar rush” or “sugar high” we still don’t think of ourselves as abusers of drugs when we overeat sugar, flour or wheat.
There is plenty of research, like that done at the University of Florida, showing that certain foods, such as those that contain sugar, create the same responses in the brain’s dopamine receptors as alcohol and other addictive substances. In addition, it states that sugar actually surpasses cocaine as a reward.

Intuitively, we all know that, but what kicks in is the number one symptom of addiction: denial. Who wants to admit that they are a drug addict and their drug of choice is food (or at least highly processed and refined foods)? Many recovered drug and alcohol addicts have said that it was harder to get off sugar, flour, and wheat than it was to get off drugs and alcohol.

Think about that for a minute.

Does that give you an idea of just how powerful the draw is to use these substances?

Just know that it’s not your fault. Sugar, flour, and wheat have been in our food system long before you were even born. But armed with the information in this e-book, on our website, or any other source of help, now that you’re aware of
the power of these substances, you need to take steps to help yourself.

**Cravings**

A craving is a powerful desire for something. Research indicates that pretty much 100% of women and 70% of men have regular food cravings.

People who are not binge eaters may tell you that your cravings are all in your head, but in fact cravings are very real, biological responses. Three regions in the brain—the hippocampus, insula, and caudate—are responsible for cravings and tend to be stronger than the brain’s reward center.

When you’re stressed or anxious or otherwise upset, this is the moment when your craving for emotionally-satisfying foods kicks in. During
your food binge your anxiety and stress seem to melt away—
hence the strong “reward” factor. 
Consuming sugar, flour, and wheat raises serotonin, one of 
our body’s natural chemicals that maintains mood balance 
and has a calming effect.

**Volume As a Trigger**

Later on in this e-book we will get to a healthy food plan for 
recovery, but please keep in mind that large volumes of food, 
even on the food plan, can trigger cravings. In other words, 
eating large amounts of food causes a change in one of the 
brain’s chemicals, dopamine, which activates an appetite for 
the very food that stimulated the dopamine level in the first 
place.

In order to treat food addiction—or any addiction, actually—
you must change your lifestyle. For us it means not only 
changing the foods that we eat but also the amount that we 
eat.
The Myth of Willpower

Many people who suffer from BED (or any other form of addiction) have probably bemoaned the fact that if only they had more willpower, they could overcome their dependency on food.

But willpower is not the problem.

When it comes to binge eating, nobody has enough willpower to stop it once and for all. Roy Baumeister, a Florida State University psychologist, and New York Times science columnist John Tierney wrote a book called *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Strength* in which they show that willpower is a form of mental energy that is fueled by glucose.

What this means is that your crumbling resolve is not a figment of your imagination or evidence that you are lazy; it means that after you deplete your glucose reserve your ability to control your actions, emotions, and choices becomes weak. Hence succumbing to temptation and making poor decisions. To quote Tierney: “We call it the dieter’s
catch-22: in order to not eat, you need willpower. But in order to have willpower you need to eat.”

**Dependency Can’t Be Controlled By Willpower Alone**

Since willpower is a finite resource that inevitably becomes depleted, when we put all our addiction-stopping eggs into the willpower basket, we are just setting ourselves up to fail. And no amount of willpower can make you put the carton of ice cream down if you are getting something out of it—which everyone with an addiction is.

Louise Hay distills addiction down to the belief that we’re not good enough. Any type of compulsive behavior is a means of running away from all those painful, uncomfortable, and frightening feelings that are tumbling around inside of us. We binge eat to numb these feelings,
and then the binge eating itself serves as a distraction from examining and dealing with the feelings.

In other words, we have a need to binge eat.

It is only by acknowledging and then releasing the need that we can recover.

**Abstinence**

First, let us clarify exactly what we mean by abstinence. Abstinence is, in this case, a complete avoidance of sugar, flour, and wheat—those substances that we constantly crave in our addiction. Avoiding these things may seem daunting, but once you begin to change your habits and experience the positive consequences as a result, you will find that abstinence gets easier.

There are two basic ways to recover from binge eating: incrementally or completely. In the first strategy you gradually give up trigger foods, and in the second you go cold
turkey and give up all trigger foods. We at BingeEating.com subscribe to the second model of abstinence, because we believe that giving up only some foods will still trigger cravings and cause you to either binge on another food or increase the volume of your remaining trigger foods. If you don’t cut out all your addictive foods you won’t be able to sustain abstinence from any of them.

We believe that when it comes to food addiction (and that’s what binge eating is), moderation always fails. That’s like a sober alcoholic trying to drink socially. It’s a recipe for disaster.

**What To Expect**

Because of the catch-22 nature of cravings (binge eating triggers dopamine which in turn triggers binge eating), it is very likely that you will have to abstain from sugar, flour, and wheat for the long-term. For anyone with a dependency on a substance that provides such emotional “relief” this can seem as though you are being asked to cut off a leg. This is the reaction of the addict. But if you think about the life you desire—a happy, healthy life free from the rollercoaster of binge eating and the inevitable feelings of disgust, despair,
and shame—a sugar-, flour-, and wheat-free life won’t seem as scary.

The benefits of sugar, flour, and wheat abstinence are vast:

**Natural weight loss** – Cutting out sugar, flour, and wheat will automatically cause natural weight loss. Why? These foods stimulate the production of insulin, which is a hormone made by the pancreas that regulates glucose levels. Insulin controls how the body uses the fat that comes from the food we ingest, and when insulin levels are low, the body has an easier time accessing the stored fat and burning it to provide energy.
**Decreased health risks** – Abstaining from sugar, flour, and wheat will lower your risk of health problems, such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and a host of other health problems as listed in the earlier section *The Long-Term Risks of Binge Eating*.

**Improved immune system** – Eating just one teaspoon of sugar suppresses the immune system for up to five hours. A weakened immune system puts us at risk of illness including infectious diseases, allergies, and the common cold.

**Self-love** – Abstinence is about more than just food; it is an emotional and spiritual journey and a means to a rich inner life of confidence, peace, and happiness.

**Mental sharpness** – We all know that feeling of being in a sugar fog or sugar hangover after a binge. Your thinking is fuzzy, you feel sleepy, you become bloated, gassy, constipated, your head pounds, and your emotions swing like a monkey on a branch. Avoiding sugar, flour, and wheat clears this up, making you mentally sharper and thus better able to perform daily tasks which involve thinking.
Self-control – Binge eating, as we’ve mentioned before, is not really about the food; it’s about our self-worth. Practicing abstinence will help you become more patient with yourself as you learn not to act out with food, but rather deal with whatever is really going on in that moment.

Cravings Will Subside With Abstinence

Cravings occur when your body begins to detox from sugar, flour, and wheat. Since you’ve been consuming these things for a long time, your body has built up a dependency. You will need to have a period of abstinence from sugar in order to release the compulsion to use it again. After a week or two your cravings for sugar will begin to dissipate, and the longer you abstain the easier it will be. Just take it one day at a time and those hardcore physical cravings will no longer be part of your everyday life.

To help yourself establish a binge-eating-free lifestyle, it’s extremely helpful (crucial, for some people) to avoid places and situations that involve sugar, flour, wheat or any of your other trigger foods, and surround yourself with people and places that are sugar-, flour-, and wheat-free. For example, if you crave dessert after dinner, you may want to reach out to
a friend or go for a walk after your evening meal. If you always go to the movies with friends who “have to have” sweets, try going with other friends who can support your sugar-, flour-, and wheat-free commitment.

Just remember that at first your cravings will cause you a lot of discomfort, then the discomfort will come and go, and finally your discomfort will diminish and eventually disappear entirely. It’s only normal for addicts to want to feel great immediately, but unfortunately that’s not how it works. Remember, it took years for your body and your mind to become addicted to binge eating, so it will take some time to reverse this addiction.
The Importance of Beginning, Nurturing, Guarding, and Loving Abstinence

We cannot emphasize enough how important it is to learn to love your abstinence. Not just be abstinent, but truly love it. Just because you have been able to successfully stop binge eating does not necessarily mean that your binging days are over. If you’re abstaining from sugar, flour, and wheat but quietly (or not so quietly) resenting the fact that you “have to,” your risk of relapse will always be right around the corner. And, as the previous section on cravings showed, one relapse can trigger a nose-dive right back into binge eating.

But if you are willing to begin your abstinence, nurture it like it’s a newborn baby, guard it with the same determination that you hid your binge eating, and love it with everything you’ve got, then you will find that your chance of relapsing is greatly decreased. So long as you are serious about, and seriously in love with, abstaining from sugar, flour, and wheat, happiness will be your lifelong companion.
Withdrawals

Many books on how to stop binge eating, and even, sadly, some counselors, seem to pay little attention to the process of withdrawal. Once you cut out sugar, flour, and wheat (or any addictive substance), your physical and emotional attachment to them is not going to disappear overnight. The body goes through a period of detoxification as it rids the system of every last trace of these toxic substances.

But once you get over the initial hump through abstinence, you will begin to feel so much better and you will be on your way to having your BED under control.
Binge eating will no longer control you.

**What To Expect with Withdrawals**

If you’ve ever tried to stop eating sugar, you know the consequences you go through, from headaches to cold-like symptoms. Those effects are indicative of just how powerful sugar is on your system, both physically and emotionally.

Withdrawal symptoms from these substances include:

- hunger (this is not real hunger, it’s emotional hunger)
- headache
- faster heartbeat
- lethargy, low energy, tired all the time
- mood swings
- anger
- anxiety, depression,
- sadness or grief over the loss of this substance
- digestive problems such as diarrhea or cramps
- insomnia
• cold or flu-like symptoms such as chills, sweating, runny nose, watery eyes

Depending on various factors—such as how long you’ve been eating these foods, how frequently you’ve binged, and your personal health—these withdrawal symptoms could last a few weeks or a few months, but as long as you stick with it, eventually the withdrawal symptoms go away—along with your craving for these substances.

If natural weight loss is a benefit of cutting out sugar, flour, and wheat, then why can’t we just wake up one day and say: “That’s it! For thirty days I will eat no wheat and no flour and no sugar!”—and then keep our promise to ourselves?

In most aspects of our lives we function and perform tasks that we don’t love but we do anyway because we’re adults and we know they’re our responsibility. But when it comes to not using sugar, flour, and wheat it’s obvious by the growing obesity epidemic that we aren’t able to say we are going to quit and then actually do it.

Why is that?
Most people can’t do that simple exercise because of cravings. What are sugar cravings? Simple. Sugar withdrawals. It’s your body wanting to re-ingest its poison.

The first day you go off sugar, flour, and wheat the cravings aren’t too bad. But if you are like most people, within two or three days you will be a basket case. (Yes, that is a medical term!) You will literally not be able to function well. You’ll likely experience all manner of the withdrawal symptoms listed above. In short, you will not be fun to be around.

I know this is going to scare some people off and I’m okay with that. You’ll be back when you’re ready.

**How To Cope With Withdrawals**

The answer to that million-dollar question “So how do I stop sugar cravings?” is abstinence. Pure and simple. You need to
have a period of abstinence from sugar, flour, and wheat in order for the compulsion to use it again to be released. Words like “compulsion” might be difficult to accept at first, but if you’re reading this e-book then you’re clearly ready and open-minded enough to face it.

You need to string together a week or more of sugar-, flour-, and wheat-free living in order to allow the sugar cravings to dissipate. Keep in mind that it will take much longer than a week to overcome the urge to use sugar all together, but the hardcore physical cravings will not be a part of your everyday life if you can commit to this initial period of abstinence.

We have found that people need to do two things to get through this initial detox, as well as the first few months of abstinence, and go on to a happier, healthier, and (as a result) thinner life.

**One: you need information.** With all the confusing and often conflicting information out there, you need to be able to separate fact from fiction. Addiction and health are two of the most confusing topics out there for the average person.
As we stated at the beginning of this e-book, we take BED very seriously and strive to provide the very best information and support for this disorder that is causing immense pain worldwide, and to help people like you to gain control over binge eating and thus your life. We’ve been there ourselves, so we know exactly how you feel.

**Two: you need support.** In order to beat an addiction or issue that has plagued you for years, you cannot do it alone. Support groups are often looked upon as havens for weak people who can’t do it themselves, can’t “pull themselves up by their bootstraps,” and can’t “just stop” like all the people around them are telling them to do.

But the evidence of success for people helping others do anything is well
documented throughout history. We humans are a social bunch. We need each other and we act and react better when we are in a group setting.

One of the biggest common denominators among people who are successful—at anything, not just stopping binge eating—is that they never did it alone. They always had support, whether it was a mentor, a friend, a therapist, a 12-step program, or any other form of assistance and encouragement. (More on this later.)

Remember, your attachment to sugar, flour, and wheat is emotional and won’t disappear after one day of abstinence. Please be patient with and kind to yourself, and enlist whichever type of support works best for you.

**Day-by-day Outline of Walking Through and Managing Withdrawal**

If you're 100% ready, willing, and open, I’m going to walk you through sugar, flour, and wheat withdrawal (and make no mistake—that is exactly what it is). The hardest part will be that first week or ten days.
A quick note about caffeine before we get started. Anything with caffeine in it is just going to trigger you. About 99% of caffeinated products also have sugar in it (or used with it). So I would suggest that you take one week to quit caffeine before you attempt quitting sugar, flour, and wheat.

If you attempt it while going through sugar/flour/wheat withdrawal, you're going to confuse the detox symptoms with the withdrawal symptoms and be unable to identify each for the future. Plus the resulting physical condition of doing both at the same time is just too hard.

**Work schedule:** I always suggest that if you can’t take a week off during this withdrawal process then start on a Friday. The first day of going off sugar, flour, and wheat won’t be so bad, and then you’ll have the weekend.

**Family:** You will need to prepare them because you’re not going to be yourself. Try to plan this for a time when your obligations in general are at their lowest. We want you to be able to rest a lot.

**Food preparation:** Be prepared!! Throw out absolutely everything with sugar, flour, and wheat in it. Have the foods
you *can* eat on hand, and have lots of them. While I do believe that some people are triggered by volume of food, eating a little more of non-sugar/flour/wheat items during withdrawals is fine.

**Make this your priority:** The most important thing to do, one day at a time, is not ingest sugar, flour or wheat. Take short walks every day and rest. A lot. Your body needs it—badly.

**Day 1:** Grace period. You may have a small headache near the end of the day and feel a little tired.

**Days 2-7:** I’m not going to lie to you. These days will likely be tough. You are going to feel depressed. But remember—for the majority of folks this is a physical, and not psychological, reaction to not eating sugar/flour/wheat as your adrenals and serotonin uptake mechanisms rest and begin to heal.

**Flu symptoms:** It’s going to feel like you have the flu. You do not have the flu and please do *not* take any flu medicine. It will only prolong the withdrawals. Drink plenty of water.
**Night sweats:** Not all folks have night sweats but if you do, just know that it is purely physical and not a sign of some dire illness. It will pass.

**Hunger:** Most people think that their stomach growls, literally makes noises, when they feel an empty feeling and a “need” to eat. One of the “symptoms” of withdrawals is going to be crazy, insane, insatiable hunger in your stomach. Just try and remember that it’s not true hunger but a withdrawal reaction. That’s why I’m okay with a little bit of volume during the first week. Eat what you want of quality veggies and meats, but please don’t binge on real sweet fruit.

**Week 2:** During the second week, you’ll start to feel better physical rather quickly. You’ll start to think, “I got this.” While confidence is good, overconfidence is deadly. Stick with the food plan. Begin to measure your portions and start to get in a rhythm with your schedule.

**Emotional recovery:** By week two, if not earlier, you are going notice feelings of all kinds that just seem to be overwhelming you. And they all are going feel like they are hitting you at once.
This is a critical time for you and your recovery.

I personally believe that sugar, flour, and wheat are not foods at all but very powerful psychoactive drugs. Where I see the biggest failure rate is the inability to accept the idea that we have been using these substances to manage our emotions our whole lives and that without it we need to learn new methods.

You life will continue. Your stressors will continue. All your relationships will continue. What won’t continue is your go-to stress reliever, your go-to escape method, and your go-to mind number.

We need to find new ways to deal with the ups and downs of life. As you’ll see in the exercise section, exercise is not for weight loss, it’s a positive method to deal with stress.
**Weeks 3 and 4:** Physically you’ll feel much better, but many folks have a tough time emotionally. Stick to your and start working on building your support system. You are going feel overwhelmed. Please don’t use these feelings as an excuse to find another substitute for chemically managing your emotions.

The third and fourth weeks are very, very important because while the main physical withdrawal symptoms are gone, the re-learning of emotional sobriety is ever present. These weeks will be modeling your life moving forward.

If you feel you’d like a mentoring program or would like to work with me personally please send me an email at Michael (at) BingeEating.com.

**Food Plan For Recovery**

An essential part of your recovery from binge eating is having a solid, healthy food plan in place as you eliminate sugar, flour, and wheat from your diet. The foundation of the
Food plan is the most important step in obtaining abstinence, and it is imperative that we follow our plan for the amounts we eat and how often, which we will get to in a bit.

Eating healthy foods and cutting out toxic ones affects the mind in a positive way, meaning that sound nutritional habits will aid you in gaining control over the insanity of this disease.

Once you begin following the plan you may be tempted to deviate—even just a teensy bit—or give yourself a “well-deserved” cheat day. Please keep in mind that the tendency to rationalize is part of an addict’s thinking, so you’ll need to summon up a little extra strength and courage to win over these temptations, and trust that these are proven guidelines that have helped countless others who have been there just like you. It worked for us, and it will work for you.
Benefits of Following the Food Plan

You’re going to see a lot of food in the coming pages, so please keep in mind that, even if you’re on the food plan, these foods can trigger cravings as well. The food plan is not a diet; dieting doesn’t help food addiction. In order to treat food addiction—any addiction, actually—you must change your lifestyle.

For us it means changing the foods that we eat, the way that we eat them, and the amount that we eat. The guidelines for men, women and children vary, so there is no one, across-the-board plan for everyone to follow.

These are just some of the benefits you’ll discover when you follow the food plan:

1. Develop healthy eating habits
2. Reduce/eliminate cravings for sugar, flour, and wheat
3. Clear the body and mind of chemicals that inhibit healthy and positive thinking
4. Heal our internal organs that may have been damaged by binge eating abuse
5. Enable our bodies to operate at optimal levels
6. Stabilize blood sugar levels and metabolism to prevent triggering cravings and binges
7. Gain self-confidence, which lowers our desire to sabotage ourselves

**NSFW: No Sugar, Flour or Wheat**

Ok, you now know that you need to abstain from sugar, flour, and wheat, but what does that mean exactly?

**Sugar.** Do you have any idea how many different types of sugar there are? Check out this list (in alphabetical order):

- Ace-K
- Acesulfame-k (Sunette, Sweet and Safe, Sweet One)
- Aguamiel
- Alcohol
- Alitame
- Amasake
- Artificial Sweeteners such as Equal, Sweet ‘n Low, Splenda, etc. (Please note: All diet sodas have artificial sweeteners, which are now known to create cravings similar to sugar.)
- Artificial flavors (some)
- Aspartame/Nutrasweet
- Barley malt
- Cane juice/Evaporated cane juice
- Caramel coloring
- Concentrated fruit juice
- Corn sweetener
- Cyclamates
- Date paste/syrup
- Dextrin
- Dried/dehydrated fruit
- Extracts
- Fat substitutes made from concentrated fruit paste
- Fructooligosaccharides (FOS)
- Fruit flavorings (some)
- Glucoamine/glucosamine
- Glycerine
- Honey
- Jaggery
- Licorice root powder
- Light, lite or low sugar products
- Malted barley
• Maltodextrins
• Malts
• Molasses/black strap molasses
• “Natural” flavors (some)
• “Natural” sweeteners
• Nectars
• Neotame
• Olestra (made from sucrose)
• Raisin juice, paste or syrup
• Rice malt, sugar or syrup
• Rice sweeteners
• Saccharin
• Sorghum
• Stevia
• Sucanat (evaporated cane juice)
• Sucraryl
• Sugars: apple sugar, Barbados sugar, bark sugar, beet sugar, brown sugar, cane sugar, caramel sugars, confectioner’s sugar, date sugar, grape sugar, invert sugar, milled sugar, “natural” sugar, powdered sugar, raw sugar, turbinado sugar, unrefined sugar, etc.
• Syrups: agave, barley, brown rice, corn, date, high-fructose corn, maple, raising, yinnie (rice), etc.
• Vanillin
• Whey (as an additive)
• Xantham gum

And anything with the following suffixes contains sugar:

• **-ides:** monosodium glycerides, olyglycerides, saccharides, trisaccharides, diglycerides, disaccharides, glycerides, monoglycerides, onosaccharides, etc.
• **-ol:** carbitol, glucitol, glycol, hexitol, inversol, maltitol, mannitol, sorbitol, xylitol, etc.
• **-ose:** colorose, dextrose, fructose, galactose, glucose, lactose, levulose, mannose, polydextrose, polytose, ribose, sucralose, sucrose, tagatose, zylose

**Flour.** As you might recall, flour turns to sugar in your stomach.

• Beans, vegetables, nuts or grains that are ground into flour, meal or powder
• Guar gum
• Starches
Wheat. This is a cereal plant that is ground up to make flour.

- Bran (if made from wheat)
- Bulgar
- Cracked wheat
- Durun wheat
- Gluten
- Kamut
- Red wheat/red spring wheat
- Seitan (made from wheat protein, gluten)
- Semolina
- Spelt
- Triticale (a wheat/rye hybrid)
- Wheat berries
- Wheat flakes
- Wheat germ
- Whole-grain wheat
- Winter wheat

It’s a really good idea to get into the habit of checking labels for lists of ingredients, as you may find other names for sugar, flour, and wheat. Please be aware that some products
contain sugar naturally, so make sure you’re checking the ingredients list and not the nutrition facts, which will list sugars naturally contained in such ingredients as fruits and vegetables. The more informed you are about what you need to avoid, the easier it will be to know what to look for.

**Food Plan: How Much and How Often**

This food plan is a guide that has worked for tens of thousands of people when incorporated with the other suggestions in this e-book. Notice we said “guide,” not magic wand. Please keep in mind that anyone jumping in and following a food plan when they are not also immersed in the inner work such as therapy, 12-steps, or other support groups will likely find that the food plan will only be a temporary measure. It’s difficult implementing a new lifestyle (such as a new way of eating) without support and resources and like-minded people with whom to share your struggles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Dinner</th>
<th>Snack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4 hours</td>
<td>(5 hours</td>
<td>(4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>later)</td>
<td>later)</td>
<td>later)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Protein

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 protein</th>
<th>1 protein</th>
<th>1 protein</th>
<th>1 dairy or 2 oz. protein</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 dairy</td>
<td>1 cooked vegetable</td>
<td>1 cooked vegetable</td>
<td>1 fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 fruit</td>
<td>1 fresh vegetable</td>
<td>1 fresh vegetable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 grain or starchy vegetable</td>
<td>½ daily oil</td>
<td>1 grain or starchy vegetable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Men: add 1 fruit or 1 grain or 1 starchy vegetable</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>½ daily oil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Getting your BED under control and being on the road to recovery is about all foods and beverages. Here we provide a list of appropriate protein, vegetable, starch, dairy, condiment, fat, grain and beverage choices.

**Protein:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4 oz.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beef</td>
<td>4 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chicken</td>
<td>4 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dried beans</td>
<td>1 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eggs</td>
<td>2 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fish</td>
<td>4 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hot dogs (not sugar cured)</td>
<td>4 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lamb</td>
<td>4 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pork</td>
<td>4 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shellfish</td>
<td>4 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turkey</td>
<td>4 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>veal</td>
<td>4 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vegetarian protein (tofu, tempeh)</td>
<td>6 oz.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vegetables** - 1 cup of any of the following:

- artichoke
- mushroom
- asparagus
- okra
- bamboo shoots
- onions
- beans (yellow or green)
- peppers
- bok choy
- pimentos
- beets
- radishes
- broccoli
- rhubarb
- Brussels sprouts
- romaine
- cabbage
- rutabaga
- carrots
- sauerkraut
- cauliflower
- snow pea pods
- celery
- spinach
- chicory
- summer squash
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese cabbage</th>
<th>Swiss chard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cucumber</td>
<td>tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dill pickles</td>
<td>turnips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eggplant</td>
<td>vegetable juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>endive</td>
<td>water cress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>escarole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>greens *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*beet, collard, dandelion, kale, all types of lettuce, mustard, any sprouts (no wheat grass)

Note – tomato juice or vegetable cocktail juice without sugar may be used as a cooked vegetable substitute. 1 cup juice =1 cup cooked vegetables.

**Fruits:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>apple</th>
<th>1 medium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>apple juice</td>
<td>1/2 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>applesauce</td>
<td>1/2 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apricots</td>
<td>3 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>berries</td>
<td>1 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citrus juice</td>
<td>1 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cantaloupe</td>
<td>1/2 (6&quot; dia.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cherries</td>
<td>1 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cranberry juice</td>
<td>1 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fruit cocktail</td>
<td>1 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grapefruit</td>
<td>1/2 large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grapes</td>
<td>1 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>Quantity/Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>honeydew</td>
<td>1/4 (7&quot; dia.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiwi</td>
<td>3 small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lemons, limes</td>
<td>2 small/1 large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nectarines</td>
<td>2 small/1 large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orange</td>
<td>1 large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peach</td>
<td>1 large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pear</td>
<td>1 large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pineapple</td>
<td>1 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pineapple juice</td>
<td>1/2 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plums</td>
<td>3 med.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prune juice</td>
<td>1/2 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tangerine</td>
<td>2 small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watermelon</td>
<td>1 c.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Starches:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starch</th>
<th>Quantity/Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>baked potato (white)</td>
<td>1 small (6 oz.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans (lima, navy, all dried beans)</td>
<td>1/2 c. cooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corn</td>
<td>1 med.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corn (kernel)</td>
<td>1/2 c. cooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mashed potatoes (white)</td>
<td>1/2 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mashed yams</td>
<td>1/2 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parsnips</td>
<td>1/2 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peas, dried</td>
<td>1/2 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingredient</td>
<td>Quantity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peas, green</td>
<td>1/2 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pumpkin</td>
<td>1/2 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sweet potato</td>
<td>1 small (6 oz.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>squash*</td>
<td>1/2 c.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* acorn, butternut, Hubbard, winter and spaghetti squash

**Dairy:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>buttermilk</td>
<td>1 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low-fat or non-fat ricotta cheese</td>
<td>1/2 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>milk (skim or 1 %)</td>
<td>1 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low-fat cottage cheese</td>
<td>1/2 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low or non-fat yogurt</td>
<td>1 c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unsweetened soy beverage</td>
<td>1 c.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note – if you are dairy sensitive, eliminate dairy and substitute 2 oz. of any type of protein. Also, dairy may be used as a protein.

**Condiments** - Any spice or sauce that is sugar-free, alcohol-free or wheat-free including, but not limited to, mustard, tamari, salsa, non-fat yogurt, lemon juice, etc. Limit spice and condiment use to the levels recommended in
recipes or no more than 1 teaspoon per day of any one spice and no more than two tablespoons per day of any one sauce.

**Fat** - Women choose one and men choose two from the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>oil (olive, coconut)</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>butter</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mayonnaise</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salad dressing (without sugar, artificial sweetener, or corn syrup)</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grains** - 1 cup of any of the following, measured after cooking:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grain</th>
<th>Grains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>amaranth</td>
<td>grits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>barley</td>
<td>millet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brown rice</td>
<td>oat bran*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buckwheat</td>
<td>oatmeal +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereals:</td>
<td>quinoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puffed brown rice</td>
<td>3 rice cakes = 1 serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puffed corn</td>
<td>cream of rye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puffed millet</td>
<td>rye</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(1/2 c. raw = 1 c. cooked)*

+ Non-wheat, sugar-free, dry cereal

**Beverages** – Suggested drinks are water, carbonated water, herbal tea, decaffeinated coffee or decaffeinated tea.

Clear soup (without sugar) is permitted before lunch or dinner.

Tomato juice or vegetable cocktail juice without sugar may be used as a cooked vegetable substitute. 1 cup juice = 1 cup cooked vegetables.

Please note: All diet sodas have artificial sweeteners, which are now known to create cravings similar to sugar.
Journaling: A Tool For Success

Journaling is a great tool for success from binge eating or any other type of addiction or compulsion, because it enables us to shine a light on our deepest, darkest thoughts. Shame hides in the darkness, so when we throw that floodlight on it, it has nowhere to go. It cannot have the same hold on us when it has been exposed.

Journaling is like therapy, only instead of telling someone else, you’re telling yourself via a notebook. It allows you to take those sometimes cryptic or nebulous thoughts and focus them into concrete words. Journaling is also an effective way to track your progress, motivate and inspire you, and possibly even reduce your chances of relapse.

Further benefits of journaling include: clarity, learning more about yourself, gaining insight about what’s going on, an
outlet for stress, increasing accountability, and reminding yourself how far you’ve come.

**The Importance of Rigorous Honesty**

Here’s the key, though. The difference between successful people and the ones who fail is that the people who were able to stay off sugar didn’t only record what they ate, they recorded how they *felt* when they ate it.

I would like to encourage you to do the same. I’ve even created an easy, printable PDF template to get you started: you can [download your food journal page here](#). If you’re honest in your journaling, you will start to see a very distinct pattern in your feelings and in your use of sugar. My successful clients always start to find out things like:

“Felt down and anxious before three slices of cake, but after and during—just for a few minutes—I felt right with the world. Then I crashed again and it was even worse.”

“Ate 8oz broiled salmon and 8oz broccoli, felt the same before and after.”
“I can’t believe I ate a one pound bag of M&Ms, but the stress of work melted away.”

“The cravings for chocolate don’t seem to hit me on the weekends.”

And so on and so forth.

This is a simple system, requiring just a 99¢ notebook, but it has changed many lives for the better. There is no need to change your eating patterns just yet; simply record your food intake honestly.

Remember to record not just your food, but also your feelings. How did you feel before binging? What did your mind tell you about what you were eating and why you were eating it? And how did you feel afterwards?

Journal like this for one month and then review it. I think you will find that, without a shadow of a doubt, you use food (and particularly sugar) to manage your emotions, if only for a few brief moments.
This task requires that you be very honest with yourself. Remember that no one but you ever needs to read what you wrote, so if you find yourself being anything less than honest in your notebook, ask yourself who you are trying to fool.

The people who succeed, stay close to sugar free, and reach their goal weight are rigorously honest in this process of uncovering their feelings around the use of this drug. Remember, there is no need to change your eating patterns just yet. We have to change the way that we think about sugar, and the change in diet will just happen—almost like magic.

**Body Image**

Recovering from BED will be much easier if you can learn to accept your body at every stage of the process. Your journey
will not only be easier, but more pleasant, too, if you surround yourself with people who are traveling the same path. Just the sheer act of talking to a like-minded fellow on the phone or meeting them for coffee will provide relief, even if only for that moment, from your thoughts of shame or self criticism of your body.

**Acceptance At All Weights**

This is so much easier said than done, especially with the media bombarding us with societal expectations of what we should look like in order to be okay/lovable/accepted. Most of these images we see are, for the most part, unattainable.

But this is not just an external problem; our internal thoughts about our bodies are often our worst enemy. Even people who are considered physically attractive can suffer from negative body image. There are a lot of emotional components to how we feel about our bodies and those emotions can be triggered by external forces.

Here are some external forces that can cause negative body image and BED:
• Being bullied and/or teased as a child or mistreated as an adult
• Loneliness
• Experiencing prejudice or discrimination because of your weight, body size or lifestyle
• Being shamed by others
• Being stared at or teased for your weight (whether too heavy or too thin)
• Getting bypassed for a promotion and/or raise because of your weight
• Media and societal pressure regarding obesity and placing too much value on being thin

Part of the recovery process, and what we will help you with, is learning to love the body you are in, no matter what size or shape you are. We are all beautiful beings and we are all okay/lovable/acceptable just as we are.

We realize that learning to love the body we have is easier said than done and it does take practice, so that is why we encourage you to join others who are on the same journey.
Self-Care and Exercise: Working Out and Working Within

Self-Care

Practicing self-care is the antidote to negative self-talk, poor body image, and inability to take action (or taking the “wrong” action). It is such a simple concept that it can be easy to overlook it.

While you are fighting the good fight to overcome sugar, flour, and wheat cravings and recover from BED, it is
imperative that you balance your work with a little play, a.k.a. self-care. Since the effects of this disorder tend to be in the realm of self-loathing, being kind to yourself—even if it seems frivolous—is an important part of the plan. And bear this in mind: what might feel like a frivolity to you is usually a necessity to someone without BED, so perhaps a change in your perspective about yourself is in order. There are a lot of different ways you can take care of yourself and some of them may surprise you, but, trust us, they really work.

So this is where I tell you to go get a massage.
Your entire being is saying: I don't need a massage, I need to lose X amount of weight, or I need to stop binging!

I hear you. Now go get a massage.

Self-care is defined, quite simply, as being kind to yourself. You do this mostly with self-talk but also, as I'm about to show you, in performing little acts of kindness that you have been putting off or that you’ve been doing for others instead of yourself.

**Examples of Self-Care**

- Treat yourself to a massage
- Get a mani-pedi
- Buy yourself an affordable gift, something that makes you smile
- Spend an afternoon with the kids in the pool
- Unplug from your phone and computer and relax with a new book
- Do a kind deed for someone else
- Volunteer at a local charity
- Take your neighbor’s dog for a walk
• Take a walk on the beach with a friend you haven’t seen in a long time
• Join a dance class
• Learn how to play an instrument
• Take an art class
• Spend the afternoon at a museum
• Join a gym and set attainable goals for yourself to get in shape (works physically and mentally)
• Tackle a project you’ve been putting off, such as organizing a closet, cleaning out the garage, or donating old clothes to Goodwill

If you can spend just 50% of the day saying kind things like "It's been a good day, I've stayed on my food plan and I went in the pool with the kids" instead of "I'm such a loser, I'll never be able to quit sugar," then you are well on your way to recovering from BED.

**Exercise: It’s Not What You Think**

Exercise is for managing your emotions first, not for physical health and certainly not for weight loss.
What the heck does *that* mean?

Obviously, a by-product of exercise is weight loss, but it’s important to stop the binging first, and understanding the role that exercise really plays in stopping it is key.

Exercise does not just affect the body, it affects your mental and emotional state, too. Regular exercise can relieve stress, decrease depression and anxiety, improve your sleep, and boost your mood.

We want you to think about exercise in terms of healing your adrenal glands, your serotonin uptake processes, and all the
ways the body feels good naturally. After years of abuse and artificial activation, these mechanisms are simply beat to hell. They can’t function as God or nature intended.

**How Exercise Helps in Recovering From Binge Eating**

Exercise will heal these mechanisms, albeit slowly. The key here is, as the Nike slogan goes, “Just do it.” Just let go of the idea of burning calories or losing weight for now. What you want to do is heal the parts of your body that keep forcing you to use the substances you know you need to quit.

Here’s how regular exercise can help you:

- **Boosts your mood** – Exercise releases endorphins, which are a group of hormones in your brain that give you energy and make you feel good. As well as helping to relieve depression and anxiety, regular exercise may also help prevent you from relapsing.

- **Increases self-esteem** – Regular activity is something you do for yourself, so it can positively affect
your sense of self-worth as you feel a sense of achievement.

- **Improves sleep** – It doesn’t take much exercise to start improving your sleep. If you exercise at night, choose moderate, stretching exercises such as walking or yoga.

- **Increases energy** – To give yourself a boost of energy, start your morning off with even a few minutes of exercise. Daily exercise also strengthens your immune system.

- **Allows you to cope better** – Exercise is helpful in dealing with life’s stresses in a healthy way, instead of resorting to binge eating (or any other addiction), which makes you feel worse.

**How to Create a Realistic Exercise Plan**

To enjoy the benefits of exercise, you don’t need to turn into Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson. Just 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times a week ought to do it, or even breaking it down into two 15-minute or three 10-minute exercise sessions will do. The point is to do something and do it regularly.
If you’re new to exercise or it’s been a while, start with 5- or 10-minute period and then slowly increase your time. It may feel as though you don’t have the energy to do anything, but here’s the catch-22: the more you exercise, the more energy it’ll give you. So the key, as we’ve said before, is to just do it as best you can. We promise you that if you keep at it on a regular schedule, you will feel the benefits as listed above.

Write it down on your calendar so that it becomes a must-do task, rather than an extracurricular activity that you may or may not get to by the end of the day. Choose a time when you know you have the best chance of committing, such as first thing in the morning or on your lunch break or right before dinner.
Some suggestions for moderate exercise:

- walking
- yoga
- swimming
- cycling
- dancing (in the privacy of your home!)
- low-impact aerobics
- rebounding (on a mini trampoline)
- tennis or badminton
- playing catch with a friend or your dog
- Frisbee
- household chores like raking leaves/mowing the lawn/vacuuming/washing the car

My favorite exercise is walking, but sometimes people are even embarrassed to do that. I would recommend, if you are serious, to gather the courage, find a workout buddy, and hold each other accountable. Maybe even visit structured classes of some sort together.
We think the tiny shift in the way you view the exercise and the reasons you are doing it in the first place can really launch your recovery from binge eating. Exercise is more important than you think and much more important for recovery from binge eating disorder than for burning calories.

**Meditation**

Meditation is all the rage these days with Fortune 500 companies, the Healthcare Industry, our public schools systems, colleges and universities, and even tech companies like Google, Apple, and Facebook.

We try to steer clear of advising people on their spiritual life here at BingeEating.com, but we do believe it is a necessary part of recovery and one you should cultivate, however it fits into your life. It definitely brings us much peace and comfort, and that intangible thing that we need to move forward.
Benefits of Meditation

Meditation has been practiced for thousands of years and is a very useful tool for cultivating relaxation and a calm mind, as well as for getting know and trust yourself. Meditating will help you learn that you don’t have to listen to all that negative self-talk that echoes around your head all day but rather focus on the things that are important.

The benefits of meditation include:

- Gaining a new perspective on stressful situations
- Building skills to manage your stress
- Increasing self-awareness
- Focusing on the present
- Reducing negative emotions
- Calming anxiety
- Relieving depression
- Lowering blood pressure
- Easing pain
- Improving sleep

I literally can’t describe to you in words the benefits that a solid meditation practice has brought to my life. There is just
a calmness that I feel, even in the face of what seems impossible.

If it’s time to change your life by changing the way you eat, then it’s time to work on the mind and the thoughts that got you here. A solid meditation practice can get you to your goals quicker.

**How To Meditate**

Meditation is very simple: you just sit quietly and focus your attention away from your thoughts, generally on your breathing. There are many different ways to meditate, such as:

- **Guided meditation** – where you visualize images of places or scenarios that you find relaxing. Generally this is easiest when you are guided by a teacher or tape.
- **Mantra meditation** – where you repeat a word or phrase to prevent distracting thoughts. This can also be done by following a tape.
- **Mindfulness or breath meditation** – where you practice increased awareness by focusing on your
breathing. When thoughts or emotions come up, you simply acknowledge them and let them go.

- **Transcendental meditation** – where you repeat a personally assigned mantra, such as a word, sound or phrase, in a specific way by a certified teacher. This usually costs a fee.

Mindfulness or breath meditation is probably the easiest to get going on right away. Choose a time, generally first thing in the morning or last thing at night, close your eyes, and sit comfortably for anywhere from 5-20 minutes (or longer, but it’s best to start small). That’s it. You’ll find that your mind races and jumps and thinks and shouts and sings and provokes, etc. Your only job is to continue to sit there until your time is up. Every time a thought comes into your head, just gently pull your mind back to focus on your breathing.
You Can’t Do This Alone: Support Groups

No one wants to go through recovery alone, and that’s okay to admit because, the truth is, you can’t do it alone. Human beings are herd animals. We thrive in groups. We belong in groups. And we are our own worst enemies. If we could do this alone we already would have, right?

I can hear what you’re probably saying now: “But I don’t want to go to meetings, I hate those stupid meetings!” Okay. We’re cool with that. But you do have to find someone, at least one person, who understands exactly where you are, what you are doing to yourself, and your plan to walk out of
it. You have to be honest with this person and honest with yourself.

Family and friends are great, but they’ve been around you for awhile and know you as you are; they’re used to you that way and, quite frankly, most people don’t like change. They might not be as supportive as you’d like them to be, or need them to be. And that’s not something to blame them for; it’s just the nature of most relationships. You also might not be as open to being honest with them.

So it’s up to you to find the support of people who can be objective, who will not be afraid to be honest with you, who will call you on your BS if they need to, whom you can be totally honest with and not be afraid of being judged. Most of all, they need to understand your disorder. If your family and friends don’t share your disorder, they’re less likely to “get it” and therefore less likely to be able to help you.

**Successful People Never Do It Alone**

Whether a person is successful financially, in their career, as new parents, or health-wise, they all lean on a support group of some kind. Even the big names like Steve Jobs, Oprah,
and Donald Trump. That’s how they get to the top of their game. They built a team of experts, advisors, and others with whom they can get guidance, advice, feedback, and encouragement. Richard Branson, entrepreneur and founder of Virgin Group, has said that the reason he’s successful is because of his team.

A Word On 12-Step Programs

But back to 12-step programs. They can be an integral part of your recovery. Our opinion about 12-step programs is based on 30 years of attendance at meetings worldwide. Having a support group and a program to follow is essential. You may be aware of OA (Overeaters Anonymous), which is the
largest of these programs. OA does not have a defined eating plan and its members get to “name their own abstinence.” Many people in OA define their abstinence as we do and we believe abstinence as we have defined it is critical to your success.

But we’d like to recommend two other 12-step programs that do define abstinence in the same way we do: one is FAA (Food Addicts Anonymous) and the other is Food Addicts in Recovery.

The thing I like about these two groups (and OA) are the telephone meetings. Around the clock you can just pick up the phone and listen. You don't have to say anything, just listen and see if you can relate.

It doesn’t matter what form of support you get, as long as you reach out to a safe group or therapist to guide you in your journey. There are many ways to succeed, but doing it alone is not one of them.
Conclusion

I’ve been asked what I hope you, the reader, will get from this e-book. The answer is two things. One is hope. I hope that I have been able to shine the light on this issue just enough for you to feel that there is a possibility that you, too, can be successful in ending your binge eating, and that you can see a clear path to serenity and peace around food, a path that others have taken successfully and one you can also travel.

The second thing, and the one I take most seriously as the steward of the site BingeEating.com, is that I want you know, deep in your being, that you are not alone. It is well known that folks like us are “isolators” and that we tend to hide our eating and so we tend to hide ourselves. Until now our entire life has been spent in a prison of isolation and the cure is simply to reverse that pattern of isolation. We were not born with it. Humans are herd animals. We thrive and grow, live and love with others.
It is also well known that one of the cures, if not the primary one, for these types of maladies are mutual aid societies. Groups of like-kind, like-minded people banding together to support each other on the journey. I want you to know that you have that here. As we grow this site many more resources will be set into place for you to meet with others on this same journey.

Your feedback is incredibly valuable to me and I really wish you, the very small percentage of folks who read this e-book all the way through, would send me your feedback. Anything really. I have tough skin. I can take criticism and critique as long as it’s positive and would help the site serve others.
Tell me what you need or would like to see. We are in this together and I see this site as yours with me as the steward. If you’ve ever thought that you could or would want to help others once you’ve begun to heal from binge eating, then you’ve come to the right place. Honestly, that’s what we’re all about. Send me your comments to Michael (at) BingeEating.com

Be well,

Michael