

# Smart Solutions to Workplace Eating Dilemmas

Work environments have a huge impact on the foods we eat and can present barriers to personal nutrition choices. Use this guide to find smart solutions for common workplace eating dilemmas to help you stay on track with your health goals.



**1. No time to break for lunch.** Breaks are your time to recharge, refuel, and reset. Some days, there may be little or no time to take a break. Not eating for long periods of time can set us back physically and mentally. Rather than completely skipping a meal, ask for help and break away for five minutes to re-fuel. Keep a simple snack like nuts, snack bars, or fruit in your pocket or at your workstation for quick energy on busy days.

**2. The community candy bowl.** Whether patient families gift you food, it's a holiday, or a co-worker is celebrating a birthday, it is common for sweet treats to be at the workstation or in break rooms. Sweets are high in added sugar and calories, while being low in nutrients. To cut back on workplace treats, try a number of simple strategies. First, try taking smaller portion sizes. For example, ask a co-worker to split a cookie with you. A co-worker can also serve as an accountability partner to say "no" to sweets together. Also, try swapping fruit for dessert. Fruits contain natural sugar, which satisfy the craving for something sweet while providing vitamins and minerals. If food is visible, cover or move it out of sight to resist temptations. If you are able to save food for later, take it home to freeze. Finally, reward yourself for sticking to your intentions of cutting back on workplace treats.

**3. Dehydration.** It is essential to drink water throughout your shift to stay hydrated. Having trouble sipping water throughout your shift? Bring a refillable water bottle to work and keep it close to your workstation. If plain water is not your preference, try infused water. Sliced cucumber, limes, lemons, oranges, and even herbs diffuse flavors well in water. In order to make drinking water a habit, pair it with another task. For example, every time you check your phone, take a sip of water.

**4. Stress Eating.** Whether a stressful situation occurs at work or stress is carried into work from home, it is important to cope in healthy ways. Stop stress eating in its tracks by identifying why you are eating. This simple identification can propel you to pick an alternative coping method. Practice mindful breathing exercises, write in a journal, or seek help in a conversation with a close co-worker. Don't be afraid to ask for help and talk it out. At your first opportunity, schedule physical activity. Try running, group exercise classes, or your favorite exercise to clear your mind. If you still want to eat for comfort, find healthy alternatives. For example, try Halo Top brand ice cream. Individual pints of Halo Top ice cream are lower in calories and higher in protein than other brands, while still maintaining delicious flavor. Last but not least, be kind to yourself and release any guilt associated with emotional eating.