

YOUR RESET POWER · FREE GUIDE

ADHD and

The Eating You Can't Stop

Why willpower was never the problem. Including the days you forget to eat, and the food rules you grew up with.

How to read this

About 30 minutes to read. Read it in bits. Each chapter stands on its own.

If you need something right now, go straight to Chapter 13, the quick reference. Find where you are and use the one thing underneath it.

Need help right now?

If this might be binge eating disorder or bulimia, Beat's helpline is free:

0808 801 0677.

If you're in danger, call **999**. Samaritans are free on **116 123**, or text SHOUT to **85258**. 18 or under? Childline is free on **0800 1111**.

Not in the UK? Find the number for your country at yourresetpower.com/help-now.

Jeanette, Your RESET Power

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Why this book exists

Nobody talks about this part of ADHD.

They talk about distraction and disorganisation. They talk about forgetting things and losing focus and being late. They talk about the ADHD that looks chaotic and scattered and sometimes almost funny.

They do not talk about standing in a kitchen eating past the point where it hurts. They do not talk about the hand that keeps moving even when the stomach is full. They do not talk about looking down at an empty packet and not being able to explain how you got there, or sitting on the floor in tears because you couldn't stop yourself.

They do not talk about the shame that follows. The names you call yourself. The comparison between your stomach and every flat one you see on a screen. The promise you make that tomorrow will be different. And tomorrow, the same voice comes back, and says the same things, and the hand moves again.

This book exists because you deserved an explanation years before now. Not a diet plan. An explanation. Of what is actually happening in your brain and why willpower was never going to be enough to fix it.

This is not a recovery programme. It will not give you a meal plan or a calorie target or a step system. What it will give you is the truth about why this happens, specifically in ADHD brains, and real tools that work with that brain, not against it.

You are not greedy. You are not lazy. You are not someone who doesn't care about their health. You are someone whose brain is doing something very specific, for very specific reasons, that nobody explained to you properly.

That stops here.

This book also covers forgetting to eat all day, and the food rules you grew up with. Both play a part in the eating you can't stop, and both are easy to miss.

It was never about the food

Nobody starts here because they love eating too much.

The eating is doing a job. And until you understand what job it's doing, you cannot find something else to do that job instead.

For most people with ADHD, especially those also carrying trauma, food is not chosen because it tastes good. It is chosen because it is fast, reliable, available, and legal. It does something almost nothing else does in the moment: it turns the volume down. It gives the brain a hit of something it has been running without all day. It provides, briefly, the one thing an ADHD nervous system is chronically short of.

Relief.

The food is not the problem. The food is the solution your brain found to a problem nobody helped you solve any other way. Understanding that changes everything, including what you can actually do about it.

Think about when it happens. It is rarely first thing in the morning, when you have resource. It is rarely in the middle of something interesting, when your brain has what it needs. It is at the end of a long day. After a stressful week. When you are bored or overwhelmed or have spent hours performing normality in a world that takes more out of you than it does out of most people.

The food arrives at exactly the moment your nervous system has run out of everything else. That is not coincidence. That is your brain finding the fastest route to relief it could find, in a system that never taught it any slower ones.

It was never about the food. It was always about what the food switches on and what it switches off.

What's actually happening in your brain

ADHD is not just a focus problem. Reward is part of it too.

Dopamine is the brain chemical involved in reward, motivation, and the sense that something is worth doing or continuing. Research suggests ADHD brains handle dopamine and reward differently. In everyday life that often means you look for quick ways to feel better, and you look for them more often.

Food, particularly high-sugar, high-fat, high-carbohydrate food, gives a fast reward. Not gradually, the way a walk or a good night's sleep might. Within minutes. The brain gets what it was looking for, and it remembers. And the next time you're running on empty, it goes back to the thing that worked.

This is not greed. This is not weakness. This is a brain using the fastest available route to a chemical it genuinely needs, because the slower routes are harder to access and less reliable for a nervous system wired the way yours is.

Impulse control is also directly affected by ADHD. The part of your brain responsible for pausing before acting, for registering 'I am full, I should stop' and actually translating that into stopping, works differently. The signal arrives. The gap between receiving it and acting on it is shorter than in other brains. By the time you have consciously processed the information, your hand has already moved.

Emotional regulation is the third piece. ADHD affects the ability to manage emotional states, to move through discomfort without needing something external to shift it. When you are stressed, bored, overstimulated, overwhelmed, or emotionally raw, the urge to eat is not just about hunger. It is your system reaching for a regulator.

Put those together: a brain that looks for quick rewards, a weaker brake on impulses, and emotions that are harder to settle. That brain is more likely to find food and use it hard. Not because of who you are. Because of how you are wired.

The voice

You know the voice. It is not loud. It does not shout. It is steady and consistent and it knows exactly what to say.

Just one more. You've had a hard week. You can start again tomorrow. You know you want it. It will make you feel better.

The voice is not your enemy, even though it feels like one in the aftermath. The voice is your brain trying to get something it needs, using the most persuasive argument it has available. It is not lying to you. It is telling you the truth. The food will make you feel better, briefly, in the moment. It is leaving out the part that comes after.

The voice is also relentless in a way that is specific to ADHD. Other people might have a passing thought about food and let it go. In an ADHD brain, that thought does not let go. It loops. It persists. It returns every few minutes with a slightly different angle until the path of least resistance, eating the thing, is the only one that feels available.

IN MY OWN WORDS

I remember one Saturday clearly. I'd gone shopping and I bought all my favourite things: dips, spreadable cheese, a massive block of cheese, white bread, crisps, sweets. All the things I knew my stomach couldn't handle. All the things I'd been denying myself.

And I just couldn't stop. Even when I was full. Even when my stomach was protruding and inflamed and I could barely move. Even when I felt physically sick. The voice just kept saying: it's one more day. You can start properly tomorrow. You've had a hard week. You deserve this.

I ended up in tears. Not because I was sad about the food. Because I couldn't control my own hand. Because I could see exactly what I was doing and I could not stop doing it. And in that moment every woman I'd ever seen on television with a flat stomach felt like an accusation.

There is also something specific about the foods the voice goes to. It is rarely salad. It is almost always something crunchy, salty, fatty, sweet, or some combination of all four. The crunch of a crisp. The specific hit of salt and fat together. High-fat, high-carbohydrate, high-

salt foods give a faster reward than most things in a kitchen. Your brain is not making poor choices. It is making the most efficient choice available to it, every single time.

For many people with ADHD, there are also phases of eating the same thing on a loop, every day, sometimes for weeks, until the brain suddenly loses all interest in it and moves on to something else entirely. That is not fussiness. That is ADHD hyperfixation applied to food. If that sounds familiar, you are not alone in it.

The voice is not a character flaw. It is a symptom of a brain that is genuinely short of something and has learned exactly how to get it. Understanding that does not silence the voice immediately. But it changes what the voice means and what you can say back to it.

The buildup nobody sees

It never comes from nowhere. It always looks like it does, that is the cruelest part, but there is always a week sitting underneath it.

The ADHD brain runs at a higher cost than most people realise. Holding it together in a world not designed for how you think. Managing the noise, the transitions, the demands, the performance of appearing fine. Regulating emotions that hit harder and faster than other people's. Masking the parts of yourself that would be judged if they showed.

By the time Saturday comes, by the time you are standing in the kitchen or the supermarket or the corner shop, the tank is already nearly empty.

- The meetings you held yourself together through when you wanted to scream
- The sensory overload you adjusted to on the surface but never actually processed
- The tasks you started and couldn't finish and the shame that came with each attempt
- The conversations you managed carefully because the people were difficult
- The sleep that wasn't quite enough
- The meals you skipped because you were too busy or too overwhelmed to stop
- The performance you put on all day just to seem like someone who has it together

The food isn't the problem you created on Saturday. It's the solution your brain reached for after a week of running on empty. The eating isn't the failure. The week was the setup.

This matters. Because if you only look at the moment you lost control, you will only ever try to fix that moment. And that is too late. The work happens earlier, in the week, in the conditions, in what you give your brain before it gets desperate.

Forgetting to eat, then eating everything

You have toast at 8am. Maybe half a slice, standing up, while you look for your keys.

Then the day starts. You're busy. You're not hungry. Lunchtime comes and goes and you don't notice it pass. Someone asks if you've eaten and you say you're fine. You mean it.

Then it's 10pm and you're standing at the cupboard. Cereal straight out of the box. Cheese off the block. Then the biscuits. And the voice turns up right on time.

Or it's a takeaway on the way home. Or it's the kids' leftovers, standing up, once everyone else is sorted.

What is wrong with you?

Nothing is wrong with you. You went all day without eating, and your body is catching up.

Short version: three alarms, the last one around 4pm. [The free Eat by the clock tool](https://yourresetpower.com/eat-by-the-clock) (yourresetpower.com/eat-by-the-clock) works out the times for you.

The signal is there, but quiet.

Your brain reads signals from your body all day. Hungry. Thirsty. Needing the loo. Tired. This is called interoception. It just means your brain noticing what your body needs.

With ADHD, that reading can be less reliable. Hunger can be easy to miss. Or it can show up as something else, like being irritable or tired. It's even easier to miss when your brain is busy with something else.

When you're focused, hunger doesn't get through.

Hyperfocus is the obvious one. You start something at 11am and look up at 3pm. Your attention was so full that a quiet signal had no chance. You didn't decide to skip lunch. You never noticed lunch at all.

Some people keep going on coffee, energy drinks, vapes or cigarettes instead of food. These can push hunger down even further. Then it all arrives later.

Masking does it too. If you spend the day watching faces and getting the tone right, that takes attention. Or staying calm when you're not, and trying not to look thick at work. It's the same attention you'd use to notice your stomach. So when someone asks how you are, you say "fine". From the inside, it feels true.

Feeding everyone else first, and eating last or not at all, is another way the day goes by without food.

Medication can change your appetite.

If you take ADHD medication, a smaller appetite during the day is common. It often comes back hard in the evening, when the medication wears off. That isn't you doing it wrong. If this sounds like you, talk to your GP or prescriber.

Eating before your morning dose can help some people. Don't change your dose or timing on your own. If you're losing weight without trying, tell your prescriber.

Hormones can play a part too. In perimenopause, changing hormones can change your appetite and make the evening harder. It's worth mentioning to your GP.

Why it all arrives at night.

In the evening, your focus drops. The busy part of the day is over. That's when the hunger finally gets through, and it doesn't arrive a bit at a time. Your body has gone all day without enough food, so it asks for everything at once.

The evening is also when stopping is hardest. [Chapter 3](#) explains why: ADHD shortens the gap between wanting something and doing it. After a long day of holding it together, that gap is shorter still.

So the 10pm eating is catch-up. It isn't greed.

There's another part to it. After a day of masking, food is the fastest reward your brain can get. It's in the cupboard and it works in minutes. Your brain has had nothing for itself all day, and the food is right there.

Why 10pm fixes don't work.

Most people try to fix this at 10pm, with rules about snacks after dinner or keeping biscuits out of the house.

By 10pm, your body has been short of food all day. You're asking a tired, hungry brain to say no to food at the hardest moment of the day. That almost never works, and it isn't because you're weak.

The fix is at 10am. If you eat during the day, there's less to catch up on at night. And because the hunger signal can't be relied on to tell you when, you need something else to tell you.

Eat by the clock.

Don't wait to feel hungry. Eat by the clock. Set an alarm. When it goes off, eat something, even if you don't feel hungry. You probably won't feel hungry. That's why it's an alarm.

The alarms are reminders, not limits. Eat in between too if you're hungry.

Keep easy food where you can see it. Out of sight is out of mind. A cereal bar on your desk gets eaten. One at the back of a cupboard usually doesn't.

Have something more filling around 4pm, before the evening. For a lot of people, this is the one that helps 10pm most.

10pm isn't where it starts. It's where the day catches up.

SOMETHING TO TRY

Three alarms

1. Pick your times. The first is about an hour after you get up. The last is around 4pm. Put one in the middle.
2. Set them as repeating alarms on your phone. Name each one so it tells you what to do, like "Eat something now. You won't feel hungry. Eat anyway."
3. Put one food you can eat without cooking where you'll see it tomorrow.

The free [Eat by the clock](https://yourresetpower.com/eat-by-the-clock) (yourresetpower.com/eat-by-the-clock) tool works out your times from when you get up. It gives you the alarm words to copy, too.

You set these times. Nobody is making you.

If you have diabetes or you're pregnant, follow your medical advice first. The same goes if you've been given a meal plan.

Already at the cupboard tonight? [The 10pm Kitchen Kit \(£3\)](https://payhip.com/b/p57N2) (payhip.com/b/p57N2) is for that moment.

Going without food on purpose to make up for eating is something different. That isn't forgetting. If that's you, read [What this is not](#). Beat's helpline is free: [0808 801 0677](tel:08088010677).

If you eat large amounts and feel you can't stop, most weeks, even on days you've eaten properly, that can be binge eating disorder. It's treatable. Talk to your GP.

If you feel faint or dizzy, see your GP this week or call [111](tel:111). The same goes if you're losing weight fast.

What it feels like from the inside

From the outside, overeating looks like a choice. Like someone who just loves food, or doesn't care enough, or could stop if they really wanted to.

From the inside, it feels nothing like a choice.

It feels like being a passenger in your own body. You can see what is happening. You are aware of being full, of the discomfort, of the fact that you told yourself this would be different this time. And you keep eating. Not because you decided to. Because the thing driving the decision is not in the part of your brain you can reason with.

There is often a dissociative quality to it, a slight sense of not quite being present, of the eating happening in a space slightly outside of normal time. Some people describe zoning out completely and coming back to find the packet empty. Others are fully aware throughout and feel unable to intervene in something their body is doing without their full cooperation.

And then it tips. The stomach is too full. The discomfort becomes pain. The dissociation breaks and you land, hard, back in your body, in the kitchen, with the evidence in front of you.

And the moment it stops feeling good is not the moment it stops. That is the part that terrifies people the most. Eating past the point of pleasure, past the point of relief, past the point where it is doing anything useful at all, still not being able to stop.

That is not greed. ADHD makes it harder to act on the signal that says stop. The signal is there. Turning it into stopping is the part that doesn't happen in time. You are not choosing to override it.

The aftermath

The eating stops. And what comes next is sometimes worse than the eating itself.

First there is the physical. The stomach distended and painful. The specific discomfort of having eaten things your body struggles to process. The heaviness. The difficulty moving. Your body making the cost of what just happened completely, unavoidably clear.

And then the voice comes back. Not the persuasive one. The other one.

You're never going to stop. What is wrong with you. Why can't you control yourself. You can't control anything. You're disgusting. You're a failure. You did it again.

The shame arrives fast and it arrives total. Every person you've seen with a body that looks controlled. Every time you've promised yourself this wouldn't happen again. Every diet you started. Every morning you woke up determined. All of it becomes evidence in a case your brain immediately begins building against you.

Nobody is crueller to you in that moment than you are to yourself. The verdict is instant, it is harsh, and it feels like the truth. It is not the truth. It is a depleted brain running its worst narrative at its worst moment, on its worst evidence.

The shame also feeds the cycle. A person who feels worthless about their eating becomes more depleted, more emotionally raw, more likely to reach for the same relief again tomorrow. Shame does not stop the pattern. It tightens it.

What actually helps in the aftermath is not discipline or resolve or another promise. It is something much simpler and much harder: putting your hand on your stomach and choosing, deliberately, not to hate it. Not because you're letting yourself off. Because shame has never once fixed this. You deserve to try something that might.

The food rules you grew up with

This chapter talks about childhood. Skip it if today isn't the day.

Most people grew up with rules about food. You probably still know some of them word for word.

- Clean your plate
- Good lad, you cleared your plate
- Eat up, you'll grow big and strong
- No snacks between meals
- You'll eat what you're given
- Pudding only if you finish
- Sweets as a reward
- Food taken away as a punishment
- Sent to bed without tea
- Good food and bad food
- Are you having another?
- Comments about your body or your size

Some of these were said kindly. Some weren't. Either way, they taught you something about food before you were old enough to question it.

Some of the loudest rules came later, from diets and from comments about bodies.

What the rules teach.

They teach you that hunger isn't yours to trust. You eat when you're told, and you stop when the plate is clean. What your body says comes second.

They teach you that food is earned. And that it can be taken away. Pudding was a prize. Going without was a punishment.

If there was fear or tension at mealtimes, you learned something else as well. Maybe someone shouted at the table. Maybe you watched a face to work out what kind of evening it was going to be. If that was your childhood, eating was never just eating.

The ADHD child at the table.

ADHD can make a child more impulsive. Maybe you took food before you asked, or sneaked biscuits from the cupboard. Maybe you were the one told off for eating fast, or for fidgeting at the table.

So you broke the rules more often than other children. You were probably punished more often too. That's often where the shame starts, long before you had any say in it.

How it shows up now.

Usually as one of two patterns. A lot of people have both.

The first is ignoring hunger. You wait to be told. You wait for a proper mealtime, or for someone else to eat first. You can go most of the day without eating and not count it as anything.

The second is eating in secret. Wrappers pushed to the bottom of the bin. Eating in the car before you go home. Waiting until everyone's in bed. Buying food at a different shop so nobody you know sees.

If that's you, you aren't sneaky. You learned that eating in front of people could get you in trouble. Or that someone would comment on what you ate. "Are you having another?" is enough to make food something you do alone. Hiding it made sense once.

The shame you feel about it belongs to the old rule. It doesn't belong to you now. If the shame is loud after eating, [The aftermath](#) is about that moment.

Reward and punishment, still.

You might still use food the way the rules did. A treat after a hard day, because you earned it. Then going without the next day, to make up for it.

That going without makes the evening harder. Your body goes short in the day and asks for everything at night. [Chapter 6](#) covers that catch-up. Then the shame comes, and the old rule says you have to make up for it again.

If the rules are still happening.

You might still live with these rules. Maybe you're a teenager at home. Maybe you can't choose what food is in the house, or when meals happen.

If these rules are still happening where you live, this chapter isn't asking you to break them. You can't always change the house. You can notice the rule and know it isn't about you.

If food is being taken away as a punishment, or you're scared at mealtimes, that isn't OK. If you're under 19, Childline is free on [0800 1111](tel:0800 1111) or at [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk).

You learned the rule as a child. You don't have to keep following it.

SOMETHING TO TRY

Name the rule

1. Write down one food rule you grew up with. Use the exact words if you remember them. Somewhere private, like your phone notes, if that feels safer.
2. Underneath, write what's true for you now. For example: "I'm allowed to eat. I don't have to earn it."
3. When the rule shows up, name it. "That's the clean-your-plate rule." You don't have to argue with it. Noticing it is enough for now.
4. If it feels doable, and it's safe where you live, eat one thing without hiding it. On a plate at the table, even if you're on your own. If it doesn't feel doable, skip it. Steps 1 to 3 are enough.

Sometimes hiding food is part of something bigger. If you make yourself sick or use laxatives, or you go without food to make up for eating, this could be an eating disorder. The same goes if hiding food feels like something you have to do. Talk to your GP. If you're under 18, you can also talk to a parent or carer you trust, or your school nurse. Beat's helpline is free: [0808 801 0677](tel:0808 801 0677).

If you eat large amounts and feel you can't stop, most weeks, even on days you've eaten properly, that can be binge eating disorder. It's treatable. Talk to your GP.

If you feel faint or dizzy, see your GP this week or call [111](tel:111). The same goes if you're losing weight fast.

If this chapter brings up a lot about your childhood, [the help box at the top of this guide](#) has places to start.

What this is not

Before anything else, some things that need to be put down.

- This is not greed
- It is not laziness
- It is not proof that you don't care about yourself or your health
- It is not something you would stop doing if you just had more willpower
- It is not a moral failing
- It is not something that says anything true about your worth as a person
- It is not something that only happens to people who can't cope
- It is not vanity to want it to be different
- It is not something you should be able to fix alone with enough determination

What this is: a pattern that is common with ADHD, in a brain that was never given the right explanation or the right tools.

The people who told you it was any of those other things were working from the wrong information. They looked at the behaviour and assumed a cause: weakness, carelessness, lack of effort. That was never accurate. ADHD is a big part of the cause. The help needs to match the cause, not the judgement.

You have probably been trying to fix this with tools built for a different brain. Strict rules. Willpower. Shame. Counting things. Promising yourself harder. None of those tools were built for an ADHD brain. Of course they didn't hold.

Sometimes it is also an eating disorder.

If you eat a large amount in one go and feel out of control while you do it, most weeks, that can be binge eating disorder. If you also make yourself sick, use laxatives, or exercise hard to make up for it, that can be bulimia. Both are more common in people with ADHD. Both can be treated.

Start with your GP. Ask to be assessed for binge eating disorder. Beat, the UK eating disorder charity, has a free helpline: [0808 801 0677](tel:08088010677).

What actually helps

This isn't a diet or a food plan. What follows are tools built for the actual problem: a brain that looks for quick rewards, has a weaker brake on impulses, and reaches for food because nothing else is available in the moment.

Take what works and leave what doesn't. Do not take it as a verdict on you if something doesn't click first time.

Start with the shame. Every time.

Before any tool, before any strategy, before anything else, the shame has to come down first. A nervous system running on shame cannot think clearly, cannot make different choices, cannot access anything except survival mode.

SOMETHING TO TRY

The hand on your stomach

After an episode of eating you couldn't stop, before you do anything else, put your hand on your stomach. Physically. Gently.

Your stomach did not betray you. Your brain did what it was wired to do under pressure.

A hand on your body can help you calm down enough to think. It's a small physical thing you can do when your head is too loud for anything else.

Say one true and kind sentence out loud. Not a compliment. Just something accurate and not cruel. 'I was running on empty and my brain found the fastest way out.'

Know your week before it knows you.

The eating happens after the week builds up. Which means the work starts in the week, not on Saturday when it's already too late.

SOMETHING TO TRY

The weekly cost audit

After your next difficult episode, write down the 48 hours before it. Not to punish yourself. To find the pattern. What was draining? What was missing? When did your brain last get something it actually needed?

Do this several times and the same things will appear. Those are your indicators. Not the food. The conditions that made the food feel necessary.

Find the moment before.

There is almost always a physical warning before the eating starts. A restlessness. A loosening of the usual restraint. It moves fast and often goes unnoticed. But it is there.

SOMETHING TO TRY

Name the real target

When the voice starts, before you eat, try completing this sentence out loud: 'What I actually want right now is...'

Not the food. What the food gives you. Rest. Quiet. Permission to stop performing. The one moment in the day that belongs only to you.

Naming the real target does not always stop the eating. But it moves you out of automatic and into aware. And awareness is where different choices become possible.

Find other quick rewards.

SOMETHING TO TRY

Your fast list

Build a short list of things that give your brain a fast reward. Do it before you need it, not in the moment when you can't think straight.

Cold water on your face. Loud music for one song. A short burst of movement. Something textured to hold. A smell strongly associated with a good memory.

Write your list now, somewhere you'll actually see it when you need it.

The ten-minute pause.

SOMETHING TO TRY

The ten-minute rule

When the voice starts, set a timer for ten minutes. You are not promising yourself you won't eat. You are only promising to wait ten minutes first.

During those ten minutes, do one thing from your fast list. Move to a different room. Drink a full glass of water.

When the timer ends, make the decision again from a slightly different position. Sometimes you'll eat anyway. That is fine. The goal is the pause.

The medication and evening eating pattern.

Many ADHD medications suppress appetite significantly during the day. You don't feel hungry. You skip meals. And then the medication wears off in the evening and your appetite comes back, hard, at exactly the same time your impulse control is at its lowest.

There's more on this pattern in [Chapter 6, Forgetting to eat, then eating everything](#).

If this is your pattern, it is worth raising with whoever prescribes your medication. Eating something small and protein-based during the day, even when you don't feel hungry, can reduce the intensity of the evening appetite significantly.

Skipping meals or restricting makes bingeing more likely. Regular meals, even small ones, take some of the pressure off the evening.

SOMETHING TO TRY

Eat by the clock

With ADHD, hunger can't always be relied on. Use the clock instead.

1. Set three repeating alarms, starting about an hour after you get up.
2. Keep easy food where you can see it. Out of sight is out of mind.
3. Have something more filling around 4pm, before the evening.

[Work out your times with the free tool](https://yourresetpower.com/eat-by-the-clock) (yourresetpower.com/eat-by-the-clock). It takes two minutes.

After. The protocol.

SOMETHING TO TRY

The landing sequence

1. Hand on your stomach. One kind sentence. Not a compliment. Just something true and not cruel.
2. Drink water. Your body needs it.
3. Do not make any promises about tomorrow. Promises made from shame rarely hold.
4. When you feel steadier, hours later or the next day, do the cost audit.
5. One small, manageable change for next week. Not an overhaul. One thing.

When to get more support.

If it happens most weeks whatever kind of week you've had, or you feel powerless over it most of the time, get help with it. Start with your GP. Ask to be assessed for binge eating disorder. If you can, ask for someone who understands ADHD as well. Beat's helpline is free: [0808 801 0677](tel:08088010677). Reaching out is not a failure.

18 or under? Talk to your GP, your school nurse or an adult you trust. Childline is free on [0800 1111](tel:08001111).

Not in the UK? In an emergency call 911 (US, Canada), 000 (Australia), 111 (New Zealand) or 112 (Ireland and Europe). To talk to someone: call or text 988 (US, Canada), 13 11 14 (Australia), call or text 1737 (New Zealand), 116 123 (Ireland). [All countries, and lines for young people](https://yourresetpower.com/help-now) (yourresetpower.com/help-now).

For the people around you

This chapter is written for the people who live with, love, or support someone with ADHD who struggles with food. If that person has shared this with you, please read it.

The person you love is not choosing food over their health, or their appearance, or their relationship with you. They are doing it because their brain is short of something it genuinely needs, and food is the fastest way it has found to get it.

What looks like not trying hard enough is almost always trying very hard in a way that isn't visible. The internal fight happening before, during, and after is not something you can see from the outside. But it is happening, and it is exhausting.

The shame they carry about this is also probably larger than you realise. They have usually been calling themselves every cruel name available for years before you arrived. They do not need another voice adding to that.

What makes it worse.

- Comments about what or how much they are eating, even gentle or well-meaning ones
- Keeping a visible count of what they've had
- Comparisons to other people or to previous versions of themselves
- Removing food from the house without discussion. This tends to increase urgency, not reduce it
- Suggesting they 'just stop' or 'just have a bit less.' This assumes the problem is choice, and it isn't

What actually helps.

- Not commenting on the food at all. Your silence on this is a gift, not indifference
- Asking at a calm moment what they actually need from you
- Understanding that the week matters. A hard week raises the risk
- Doing something you both enjoy together: connection, laughter, time that feels good

- Not treating the aftermath as a moment for discussion. That is when they need the least input from outside

If you only take one thing from this chapter: what looks like won't is almost always can't right now, and hates that as much as you do. Patience and presence will reach them in a way that pressure never will.

Quick reference

For the moments when you don't have time to find a chapter. Find where you are. Use the one thing underneath it.

01

The voice has started and you can't stop it

Name the real target out loud. "What I actually want right now is..." Then set a ten-minute timer.

02

You're already eating and can't stop

Move to a different room. Physical movement interrupts automatic behaviour more reliably than willpower.

03

It's already happened and the shame is loud

Hand on your stomach. One kind sentence. No promises. Water. The debrief comes later. Not now.

04

You can feel the week building and you know where it's heading

This is the best moment to act. Give your brain something it needs today. Use your fast list, or take one thing off your plate.

05

You're in the aftermath and making promises

Stop. Promises made from shame rarely hold. One small, realistic change for next week. That's enough.

06

You're comparing yourself to other bodies

What you are seeing is the outside of someone else's inside. You do not know their brain, their week, or what it costs them.

07

You've reached the evening and realise you haven't eaten

Eat something easy now. Tomorrow, set the first alarm.

08

It's around 4pm and you haven't eaten properly

Something more filling now, before the evening.

09

You're hiding food or eating in secret

This can come from an old food rule. Eat one thing in plain sight. If you're also making yourself sick or going without to make up, call Beat on [0808 801 0677](tel:0808 801 0677). If you can't stop even on days you've eaten, that can be binge eating disorder. Talk to your GP.

10

Nothing is working and you feel hopeless about this

This is real and it is allowed. Start with your GP and ask to be assessed for binge eating disorder. Beat's helpline is free: 0808 801 0677. If you're in danger, call 999 or Samaritans on 116 123. Not in the UK? See yourresetpower.com/help-now.

You are not the eating

You have probably been calling yourself names for this for years. Pig. Failure. Disgusting. Out of control. Those words are not the truth about you. They are the shame response talking, and shame has never once been an accurate narrator.

Your body did not betray you. Your brain found the fastest available route to relief in a system that never gave it better options. That is a different thing, and it matters that you start to see the difference.

You are not the eating. You are the person who has been trying to manage an ADHD pattern with tools built for a different brain, in a world that never explained what was actually going on, and still showing up, still trying, still wanting things to be different.

Start there. Everything else, the patterns, the tools, the change, starts with you deciding that you are worth the gentler approach. Not because you've earned it. Because shame has never once fixed this, and it is time to try something that might.

Start with one alarm

You don't have to fix the whole day. Tomorrow, set one alarm for about an hour after you get up. When it goes off, eat something.

The free Eat by the clock tool works out your three times and gives you the alarm words to copy. No email.

yourresetpower.com/eat-by-the-clock

IF YOU WANT MORE SUPPORT

The RESET Room £5 a month

A weekly check-in with me by text or voice note, and I reply personally. New guides and tools as I write them. For adults 18 and over. Cancel any time.

ko-fi.com/yourresetpower/tiers

The Direct Line £10, one-off

A personal plan in your first week, then message me on WhatsApp. I reply myself, not a team or a bot.

yourresetpower.com/the-direct-line

The 10pm Kitchen Kit £3

For the night it's already happened. What to do in the moment, and how to land afterwards.

payhip.com/b/p57N2

More free trackers and guides: yourresetpower.com/free-tools · hello@yourresetpower.com

This guide is for information and support. It isn't medical advice and doesn't replace care from a GP or therapist.