

Food Equals Mood

An Adolescent Workbook

Energy, stress, focus, and real life • Ages 12 to 18

Explore practical ways to make food work for your schedule and notice what else affects how you feel. You can skip any prompt that is not useful.

Start here

This is not a diet or weight-loss plan. Food can give energy, comfort, culture, joy, convenience, and connection. Sleep, relationships, medication, stress, access, and safety matter too.

You deserve food and support without shame.

Name (optional): _____



What I want from this

There is no single way to feel “better.” Choose what matters to you.

☐ More energy

☐ More focus

☐ Less food stress

☐ Easier meal ideas

☐ Activity fuel

☐ Help with low appetite

☐ Less skipping meals

☐ A workable sleep routine

One thing that makes eating hard right now

One thing that already helps



Notice your own signals

Hunger can show up as a growling stomach, headache, irritability, tiredness, shakiness, or difficulty focusing. Stress or medications can make signals less obvious.

In my body, I might notice...

In my thoughts, I might notice...

In my mood, I might notice...

At school, work, or practice, I might notice...

This is information, not a scorecard.



A check-in without judgment

You can use words, numbers, or leave a line blank.

My energy right now

My mood in a few words

My stress today

What my body may need

One thing unrelated to food affecting my day



A meal that works for you

A meal can be homemade, from a cafeteria, a convenience store, or a freezer. When possible, add foods that offer energy and satisfaction.

Energy

Bread, rice, pasta, cereal, oats, potatoes, fruit, tortillas.

Protein

Eggs, dairy, beans, tofu, nuts, fish, chicken, or another food you eat.

Color or fiber

Fruit, vegetables, beans, lentils, oats, or whole grains.

Flavor

Sauce, seasoning, butter, cheese, avocado, and favorites.

An easy meal I could assemble or buy



Snacks count

A snack can help between meals, before or after activities, or when a full meal feels hard.

☐ Fruit and seed butter

☐ Yogurt and granola

☐ Cheese and crackers

☐ Hummus and pretzels

☐ Cereal and milk

☐ Trail mix if safe

☐ Egg and crackers

☐ Smoothie and toast

A snack I can pack

A shelf-stable snack I would eat

An option for a low-energy day



Stress and appetite

Stress can change appetite in different ways. Food can be comforting. You can also build other ways to cope when emotions are intense.

☐ Forget to eat

☐ Have less appetite

☐ Have more appetite

☐ Feel nauseated

☐ Want specific foods

☐ Have trouble deciding

What I might be feeling

What my body may need

One kind next step I can take



My coping menu

Food can stay on the list. Add other options so you have choices.

Comforting foods or drinks

Things that help me calm down

People I can contact

Places or activities that help me feel grounded



Low-energy days

You do not have to cook from scratch to be nourished. Convenience foods are tools.

☐ Cereal and milk

☐ Toast with a topping

☐ Yogurt or fruit

☐ Soup or chili

☐ Frozen meal

☐ Rice and canned beans

☐ Cheese and crackers

☐ Sandwich or wrap

Three foods I can usually tolerate

A five-minute meal or snack

Someone who could help with groceries or food



Fit food into a busy day

School, work, practice, and appointments can make eating harder. Plan one step ahead.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Eat before leaving | ☐ Pack a snack |
| ☐ Find where food is available | ☐ Bring a drink |
| ☐ Keep a shelf-stable backup | ☐ Ask for access help |

The hardest time of day for me to eat

One food or drink I can carry

A backup plan if my first idea falls through



Caffeine hydration and sleep

Caffeine can affect anxiety, stomach comfort, headaches, and sleep differently for different people. Fluids can come from more than water.

Caffeine I use and when

What I notice about sleep, focus, or anxiety

A drink I enjoy with meals or snacks

One small change I might try, if useful



Food culture and identity

Food can reflect family, tradition, celebration, grief, faith, identity, and connection. Your food traditions count.

A food that reminds me of someone important

A tradition or meal that matters to me

A food I enjoy with friends or family

A food I would like to choose or make myself



Question food rules

Online posts and comments can create pressure around food and bodies. Your body deserves nourishment regardless of size, shape, gender, or activity.

A food rule I hear online or around me

How that rule affects me

A kinder, more realistic thought

An account or message I may limit

My worth is not based on what I eat or how my body looks.



Seven days of noticing

This is not a food log. Notice one moment and one other factor each day. Skip a day whenever you want.

Monday

A meal or snack moment: _____
Energy or focus afterward: _____
Another factor affecting me: _____
One kind thing I did: _____

Tuesday

A meal or snack moment: _____
Energy or focus afterward: _____
Another factor affecting me: _____
One kind thing I did: _____

Wednesday

A meal or snack moment: _____
Energy or focus afterward: _____
Another factor affecting me: _____
One kind thing I did: _____

Thursday

A meal or snack moment: _____
Energy or focus afterward: _____
Another factor affecting me: _____
One kind thing I did: _____



Seven days of noticing

This is not a food log. Notice one moment and one other factor each day. Skip a day whenever you want.

Friday

A meal or snack moment: _____

Energy or focus afterward: _____

Another factor affecting me: _____

One kind thing I did: _____

Saturday

A meal or snack moment: _____

Energy or focus afterward: _____

Another factor affecting me: _____

One kind thing I did: _____

Sunday

A meal or snack moment: _____

Energy or focus afterward: _____

Another factor affecting me: _____

One kind thing I did: _____



My one-week plan

Choose one small goal that fits your life.

☐ Eat after waking

☐ Pack one snack

☐ Keep an easy meal at home

☐ Add a drink with food

☐ Ask for food access help

☐ Practice kind body talk

My goal and why it matters

A first small step

A barrier and my backup plan

A person who can support me



When to ask for support

Tell a trusted adult or clinician if food, mood, or body concerns are taking up too much space. Seek prompt medical help for fainting, severe weakness, or trouble keeping food or fluids down.

Get specialized support for frequent meal skipping, fear around food, bingeing, purging, compensating for eating, rapid weight change, or intense meal anxiety. If you might harm yourself or cannot stay safe, contact emergency or crisis support right away.

A trusted adult

A counselor or clinician

Someone who can help me get food

My local crisis or emergency support



Keep what helps

Start with one meal, snack, drink, grocery item, or kind thought. You do not have to change everything at once.

Something I noticed this week

A meal or snack I would repeat

A non-food support that helped

One small thing I want to keep doing

Food is part of care. It is not a measure of your worth.

