

This checklist helps determine if a change in eating habits is needed. One "warning sign" suffices.

Immediately craving junk food upon feeling hungry indicates a potential addiction. Comfort eating, typically involving high-calorie, carbohydrate-rich, sugary, and saturated-fat foods (like frequent fast food trips), is a red flag. Even knowing healthier options exist (e.g., salads, chicken burgers at fast food places) but consistently choosing junk food, despite knowing its negative effects (sleepiness, tiredness), signals a problem. Health is relative; even small changes (e.g., a side salad instead of fries) matter. While quitting junk food might initially feel discouraging, it's normal and temporary if you persist. Decide whether gradual reduction or complete abstinence is best, allowing sufficient time for success. Don't be discouraged by occasional slips; plan ahead by reviewing restaurant menus, creating grocery lists of appealing healthy foods, and politely refusing junk food offers from friends. Regain control by consuming junk food only when necessary or infrequently. Finally, reconnect with enjoyable activities sacrificed due to weight gain or low energy, setting achievable goals for renewed participation.