It’s a common scenario that many people often find themselves in: eating and overeating without rhyme or reason. Perhaps you always seem to feel hungry or eat “just because.”

TOPS Club, Inc. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly), the nonprofit weight-loss support organization, explains the triggers that cause these behaviors and offers solutions to help curb thoughtless overindulgence.

Because It’s There

“It’s Monday, and we could all use a pick-me-up after the weekend,” says a co-worker. The local sandwich shop offers a free cookie with the purchase of a combo meal. The auto body shop replenishes a spread of sweet treats throughout the day while you wait for your service to be completed.

When food is in plain sight, it’s convenient to grab a handful simply because it’s there. Be mindful, take personal inventory, and ask yourself if you are truly hungry at that moment. There are times when you may need to remove yourself from the situation or move the temptation out of reach, if necessary.

You Skip Breakfast

It can be difficult to fit a meal into the typical morning rush, but breakfast is considered the “most important meal of the day” for a reason.

A study in the “American Journal of Epidemiology” showed that people who regularly skip breakfast are nearly five times as likely to be obese than those who don’t.

Breakfast provides your body and mind with the fuel necessary to take on the day and get your metabolism out of its resting state and back to burning calories.

“So many people start every day on a diet and routinely skip breakfast in an effort to compensate for last night’s behavior with the hopes of losing weight,” says Nicholas “dr. Nick” Yphantides, M.D., M.P.H., Medical Editor for TOPS. “In reality, skipping breakfast is much more likely to cause weight gain rather than weight loss. Overweight and obese individuals are much more likely to skip breakfast in comparison to healthier and leaner individuals.”

Unprocessed, fiber-rich foods like steel-cut or slow-cooked oatmeal, grapefruit, whole-grain and low-sugar cereals, and low-fat dairy are all best bets. If possible, prepare breakfast ahead of time or bring your breakfast with you to work if you aren’t able to find the time to eat at home.

You’re Emotional

Emotions are a common eating trigger. You may typically celebrate happy news with a gourmet dinner and dessert, or soothe sadness with a large bowl of ice cream. Anger or stress can lead to munching on a seemingly bottomless bag of chips.

While eating creates a temporary sense of physical fullness, it only temporarily distracts from the feelings that are bothering you.

In actuality, the unhealthy decisions are likely to leave you feeling guilty with a sense of regret, which may start a vicious cycle of continued unhealthy decisions.

Instead, reach out to a friend or family for support and guidance. Even a quick workout releases tension, generates extra energy, and stimulates feel-good endorphins. Relaxing behaviors, like getting a quick massage or taking a hot bath, also help calm the system.

If you are celebrating, remember that the occasion is about being with loved ones and creating memories – not about the food. Check in with your hunger level and see if you are actually hungry, or if you’ll be simply satisfied by the company.

You’re Bored

If you know boredom is a trigger for thoughtless eating, have a list of strategies in place to keep yourself busy and entertained when you feel like you don't have anything else to do.

An activity that occupies your hands is ideal, like giving yourself a manicure, reading a book, playing a game on the computer, or writing in a journal. Go for a walk with a friend and/or with your dog.

This will also take you away from the kitchen and should help cravings subside. Or, drink a glass of water, which is filling. Snacking on celery or watermelon or chewing a piece of gum can also help curb appetite.

Get Enough Sleep

Lack of sleep, or just the typical mid-afternoon energy slump, can lead a person to binge on sugary or salty treats and beverages for a boost. Researchers at Columbia University note, people who sleep two to four hours a night are 73 percent more likely to be obese than those who get seven to nine hours.

Those who get five or less hours of sleep a night are 50 percent more likely to be obese than normal sleepers.

"There is substantial and growing medical evidence suggesting some important links between adequate sleep and a healthy weight," notes Yphantides. "Recent research has indicated that the production of certain hormones, leptin and ghrelin, may be influenced by how much or how little we sleep.

"Inadequate sleep can influence these hormone levels in our body in such a way that when we are sleep-deprived, we may not be as satisfied when we eat and our appetite may be enhanced. Additionally, it's harder to be disciplined and make the right decisions when we are exhausted.

"One way that we may try to perk ourselves up is to consume extra fuel. All these actions contribute to excess caloric consumption and resulting weight gain."

Getting consistent exercise can improve the quality of sleep and make you feel more rested. Avoid exercising less than three hours before bedtime though, as it can make it more difficult for you to fall asleep.

To combat an afternoon lull, drink a large class of refreshing, cold water, take a walk around the office, or head outside for a quick walk. A change of scenery, fresh air, and sunshine can be invigorating and give you a jolt of positive energy.