

# Diagnostic Criteria for Food Dependence

HCPs should be vigilant for food dependence by watching for signs of loss of food consumption control, failed attempts to reduce intake, and inability to make changes in the face of negative consequences

**Diagnostic threshold: Clinically significant impairment or significant distress\* plus  $\geq 3$  symptoms of food dependence**

- 1 Tolerance**
  - Markedly increased amounts of food
  - Markedly diminished effect with continued use
- 2 Withdrawal**
  - Characteristic withdrawal symptoms
  - Substance taken to relieve withdrawal
- 3 Loss of control**
  - Consumption in larger amounts or over a longer period than intended



**Symptoms of food dependence**

## Dieting

- Persistent desire or repeated failed attempts to reduce or stop consumption

4

## Time investment

- More time spent in activities necessary to obtain, use, or recover food

5

## Giving up activities

- Giving up social, occupational, or recreational activities because of food

6

## Continued use

- Continued use despite knowledge of persistent physical or psychologic problem

7

*Empirically evaluate the frequency with which these criteria appear together, and the degree of impairment and/or distress, to determine the presence of food dependence*

*\*Examining clinically significant impairment or distress is particularly important when evaluating addiction.  
Gearhardt AN, Corbin WR, Brownell KD et al. J Addict Med. 2009 Mar;3(1):1–7.*