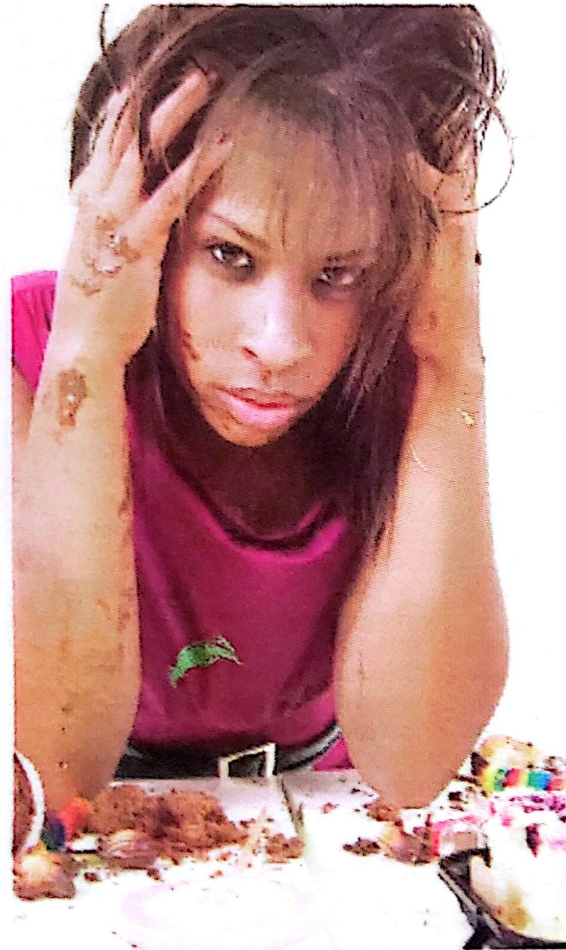


Why you are always hungry

Ever had one of those days where you feel like you could eat a horse? The experts explain what is going on and give solutions.



Although powerless about your eating disorder, it is important to know that it can be controlled. NET PHOTO

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Do you remember the last time you were really hungry? I mean the stomach growling, body shaking kind of hunger. This was Geraldine Mayanja's experience for almost two years. The 36-year-old recounts how she found herself utterly overweight and constantly broke because she was spending an obscene amount of money to keep eating throughout the night and day.

"I would eat a heavy breakfast of katogo, tea and juice at about eight o'clock, have a snack of a muffin and yoghurt at half past eight and another snack in between and then another plate of katogo at 11 am," she recalls sadly. Mayanja would eat about twelve times spending on average, Shs50,000 a day on her meals alone.

This went on until one day when she collapsed while at work and was admitted to hospital. After several tests, it was discovered that she had Hyperglycemia, commonly known as high blood sugar.

Dr Catherine Nanozi, a nutritionist, confirms that constant hunger could be a sign of underlying medical issues including diabetes, hyperglycemia, and thyroid among others.

Dr Nanozi says another reason you are always hungry could be your diet

especially if you eat foods high in fast acting carbohydrates. Because carbohydrates are absorbed quickly into the body as sugars they cause insulin to be released, thus waking up the body cells to use up glucose.

"When all the sugar is removed from the blood it makes one feel hungry for more carbohydrates to create more glucose and the cycle continues," she explains. "In other words the body is asking for nutrients but you keep consuming those that are not helpful enough so it will keep demanding for more meaning that you will continue eating junk without ever experiencing satisfaction for long," she adds.

Thirst

Purity Wako, a nutrition expert, says sometimes people mistake thirst for hunger, instead of drinking water, they opt for food. Water is an important component in the body system. Without it, our cells are unable to make use of the nutrients in the food that we eat; and without nutrients, the body will crave more food which will make you feel hungry. "Next time you feel hungry after a meal, drink water. It will immediately make you feel full and kill the hunger pangs," advises Wako.

Hormonal imbalances can also cause constant hunger. "It is common for pre-menstrual women to feel a constant urge to eat. Also hormone altering nutrients such as alcohol and caffeine products make the body crave for food," Wako explains.

STRESS

You have probably heard of the term stress-eating. This is where one goes on rampage eating anything in sight as a coping mechanism.

"When one experiences anxiety, stress or depression, their bodies have low levels of serotonin the feel-good hormone and high in the stress hormone cortisol which convinces you to load up on calories," says Dr Nanozi.

When you are not sleeping enough (seven to eight-hours) you will find yourself constantly famished. Usually insomnia is due to other factors such as stress, depression or hormonal imbalance which cause the hormone hunger to take over your body making you raid the fridge late in the night.