

True Hunger or Craving?

Aspect	True Hunger	Craving
ONSET	Gradual, builds over time	Sudden, often triggered by external cues
PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS	Stomach growling, emptiness, lightheadedness, nausea, moodiness, etc.	May include specific desires (e.g., sweet, salty) but not typical physical hunger signs
THOUGHTS	"I need to eat" or "I'm hungry"	"I want that specific food"
SATISFACTION	Satisfied by a variety of foods	Often focused on one specific food
DURATION	Lasts longer and is more persistent	Fleeting and may dissipate quickly
RESPONSE TO WATER	Typically doesn't go away with water	May temporarily diminish with water
EMOTIONAL CONTEXT	Usually not tied to emotions	Often linked to stress, boredom, or habit
TIMING	Often occurs at least a couple of hours after last meal	Can occur anytime, regardless of the last meal
POST-EATING FEELINGS	Feelings of fullness and satisfaction	May lead to guilt or unsatisfied craving

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