

When Hunger Is Not the Real Reason We Eat

How to regain control without restriction or self-blame

Ghadeer Alkumaish
TDT | Manama

“You come back from a long day, not truly hungry... yet your hand automatically reaches for the fridge. Not because you need food but because you need to feel better.”

In moments like this, hunger isn't always physical. Often, it's emotional. This is what's known as emotional eating a behavior shaped by both psychological and nutritional factors, influencing how and why we eat.

Dietitian Manar Fuad explains that emotional eating is “eating in response to emotions rather than true hunger,” creating a mismatch between the body's energy needs and actual intake. She notes that stress plays a key role, increasing appetite and shifting eating into a reward-driven behavior due to hormonal changes.

From a psychological perspective, Dr. Mariam Alammadi highlights that the issue often goes beyond food itself “Emotional eating usually isn't about food at all... it's about stress, anxiety, loneliness, or even boredom.”

Over time, the brain learns to



Emotional eating is usually not about food at all, it is about stress, anxiety, loneliness, or even boredom.

DR. MARIAM ALAMMADI

associate food with comfort. In cultures like Bahrain and across the Arab world, where food is closely tied to connection and care, this link can become even stronger.

A key step in understanding emotional eating is learning to distinguish it from physical hunger. Fuad explains that physical hunger builds gradually, comes with clear body signals, and stops when the body is full. Emotional hunger, however, is sudden, specific,



Physical hunger is gradual and body-driven, while emotional hunger is sudden, emotion-driven, and linked to specific cravings that may continue even after eating.

DIETITIAN MANAR FUAD

and driven by feelings rather than need often continuing even after eating.

This behavior can quickly turn into a cycle. Irregular eating patterns, strict dieting, and high-sugar foods can disrupt hunger signals and increase cravings. Psychologically, the aftermath also plays a role. “For many people, it's the guilt and self-crit-



Emotional Eating

- High sugar and fat foods can trigger the brain's reward system.
- May lead to weight gain and blood sugar imbalance over time.
- Experts advise balanced meals, not strict restriction.
- Pausing before eating helps improve awareness and control.
- Frequent emotional eating may require dietetic and psychological support.
- It is often linked to unmet emotional needs, not willpower.

icism after eating that keeps the cycle going,” Alammadi says.

No New Hospital Plan for South



Jaleela Al Sayyed, Minister of Health



Maryam Al Dhaen, MP

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

The Health Ministry has said the Southern Governorate is covered by existing government hospitals, primary care centres and specialist services, without announcing a new general hospital for the area.

The answer from Health Minister Jaleela Al Sayyed came in a written reply to MP Maryam Al Dhaen, who asked if there was a move to open a full public hospital covering all fields of medicine in the Southern Governorate.

The ministry said health planning is handled through the Supreme Council of Health, with other bodies, and is based on population growth, urban expansion, the working load of existing health buildings and other approved measures.

It said citizens in all governorates, including the Southern Governorate, already have access to specialist care through government hospitals and health bodies now in service. It added that residents would also benefit from King Abdullah Medical City once the health insurance scheme is applied.

The reply gave no site, cost, timetable or building plan for a new public hospital in the Southern Governorate.

Al Dhaen also asked about plans for more dialysis centres, with special mention of Isa



Bahrain primary healthcare services

- X-ray services operate nationwide during working hours, with 24/7 coverage
- Lab services have been extended at selected centres
- Dental clinics run Sunday-Thursday in morning and evening shifts
- Emergency dental care is available at nine 24-hour
- Bahrain's 24-hour health centres handle urgent primary care cases

Town, where she said the ministry had land that could be used.

The ministry said dialysis is now offered through government health centres and work with the private sector. It said the service covers existing need across Bahrain and runs around the clock under approved working and regulatory standards.

Learning and fun



At Fatima bint Asad Primary Girls School, science is coming alive through colour, creativity, and hands-on learning. Teacher Sadiqa Mirza Hassan is transforming traditional lessons into interactive experiences, using visual tools, concept maps, and student-made mini boards to simplify scientific ideas and deepen understanding. Each unit ends with foldable projects that allow students to creatively express what they have learned. Meanwhile at Al Hidd Primary Boys School, learning and behaviour have taken a playful turn with a “Super Mario”-inspired classroom initiative led by teacher Laila Yousif Ahmed. The programme uses rewards, structure, and a weekly digital newsletter titled “Golden Moments” to motivate students, improve discipline, and celebrate achievements—turning everyday lessons into an engaging and positive experience. (By Hasan Barakat)

Garage Water Run-Off Already Banned

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Public Cleanliness Law already bars washing cars or carrying out similar work in a way that sends water into streets, lanes or alleyways, Municipalities Affairs Undersecretary Shaikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Khalifa has said, after a northern council proposal sought to make garage drains compulsory.

Shaikh Mohammed said the issue of water running out of home garages was dealt with under Law No. 10 of 2019, which bans acts that cause water to flow into public roads, paths or side lanes.

He said the aim behind such proposals rested mainly on citizens and residents following the law, as this would cut water discharge onto roads, protect public safety and help preserve the look of residential areas.

His remarks came after the



Strengthening public awareness and encouraging greater respect for laws and regulations are essential steps toward achieving our objectives.

SHAIKH MOHAMMED BIN AHMED AL KHALIFA, MUNICIPALITIES AFFAIRS UNDERSECRETARY

Northern Municipal Council approved a proposal by council member Basim Abu Idris to re-



We are asking for fixed water drainage to protect citizens, so they are not held liable when water leaks outside the home.

BASIM ABU IDRIS, NORTHERN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEMBER

quire owners of homes and residential units to install drainage channels inside garages and link

them to the sewerage network or another approved drainage system.

Abu Idris said water from garage washing had become a repeated sight on streets and pavements, harming the look of neighbourhoods and leaving pools of water that could put pedestrians and road users at risk, ‘especially children and the elderly’.

Order

He said leaving the matter without clearer order could damage asphalt layers and road infrastructure, raise repair costs and lead to smells and unwanted waste outside homes.

The council said the measure aimed at keeping streets and pavements clean, improving road safety, cutting complaints from residents and bringing garage water disposal in line with municipal and environmental rules.

MP Seeks Pension Cover for Self-Employed Workers

TDT | Manama

Self-employed Bahrainis who reach 60 with no pension would be helped through unemployment insurance surpluses, under a proposal by MP Maryam Al Sayegh to cover small traders, craftsmen, fishermen, driving instructors and others who work for themselves.

The plan would also require all self-employed workers to join the social insurance system, giving them pension cover while adding more payers to the funds.

Al Sayegh said many such workers had spent years earning on their own, only to be left with no retirement income after illness, living costs or personal hardship forced them to close their commercial registrations or stop work.

She said that the proposal was aimed at Bahrainis who had worked for years outside standard jobs but were left without a safety net in old age.

“This group is not marginal,” she said. “They are fathers and mothers who spent their lives in honest work and contributed to building the economy.”

Under the proposal, part of the accumulated surplus in the



Some have reached the age of 60 without any insurance balance or pension entitlement. This threatens their living security, places them under heavy mental and financial pressure, and affects their families.

MARYAM AL SAYEGH, MP

unemployment insurance account would be used to create an exceptional fund or temporary national programme for self-employed Bahrainis with no pension cover.

Al Sayegh said the scheme would not add to the state budget because it would be funded from surplus money built up through citizens' contributions.