

Eating Habits Questionnaire



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NAME

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DATE

How to explain this form to your clients

- Here's a sample script you can use to introduce this form to your clients:

"I'd like to understand more about your current eating and nutrition habits.

It's very important that you answer the questions as honestly as you can. There are no right or wrong answers. I'm not judging you (and I've pretty much heard and seen it all).

All we're doing here is just gathering data and information to help you move towards your goals. The more you can tell me about your current habits, experiences, and mindset around eating, the more I can help."

Coaching tips

- You can use this form both as an initial assessment and as a way to track progress. You can periodically use some or all of the form's questions to measure improvement in eating habits.
- This questionnaire is designed to show general patterns or trends, or areas for discussion.
- For a specific food record, use one of the Food Journal forms.

General eating patterns

As best as you can remember right now, tell me generally about an average day of eating and drinking.

This doesn't have to be perfect; just capture your usual patterns.

TIME OF DAY

WHAT MIGHT YOU NORMALLY EAT / DRINK?

Example: 7 AM

Toast with peanut butter & jam / Coffee with cream & sugar / Glass of orange juice

Coaching tips

- This is not meant to be a food record, just a way to start discussing the patterns of an average day. Clients probably won't record much that is accurate here. It just gives you a "jumping off point" to go through an average day as they initially report it.
- For a specific food record, use one of the Food Journal forms and ensure that clients complete it as they are eating the meals (rather than too long after the fact).

Right now, are you following any particular diet or style of eating?

(e.g., vegetarian / vegan, Paleo, kosher / halal, low-carb)

 Y N

If yes, what? And for how long have you followed this way of eating?

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Coaching tips

- Be aware that what clients say they do is not always what they actually do. Vegetarian clients may eat meat; low-carb clients may have carb binges, etc. Clients are rarely as adherent as they claim to be, and recall is usually selective or poor.
- Here, look mostly for the value and meaning of a specific diet for clients. Why does following a particular diet matter to them? For instance:
 - Are they vegetarian / vegan for ethical reasons? Environmental reasons? Health reasons? Religious reasons?
- Explore the importance and significance of the diet choices, for example:
 - "What do you like about this way of eating?"
 - "What is working for you about this way of eating?"
 - "What things did you consider when deciding to eat this way? Why?"

What are some of the foods or meals you like MOST?

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What are some of the foods or meals you DON'T like?

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Coaching tips

- Explore why the client has certain food preferences. You may discover issues with taste, texture, food prep, convenience, etc.
- When building a nutrition plan, try to include the preferred foods and meals as much as possible, and / or healthier versions of them if needed.

Right now, on a scale of 1-10, how consistent would you say you are with your eating habits?

ALL OVER THE PLACE

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

PERFECTLY CONSISTENT, ALL THE TIME

If you're less consistent than you'd like to be, what seems to get in the way or knock you off track?

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Coaching tips

- Depending on the client's answers to the questions above, consider the Ready, Willing, and Able Worksheet as well as the Limiting Factors, Advantages & Behavior Goals Log.

Food and health

Do you have any known / diagnosed food allergies or intolerances? If yes, what are those?

Y N

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Do you have any suspected or possible food allergies or intolerances? If yes, what are those?

Y N

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Coaching tips

- If yes, ask for as much information as possible, including whether this is a true allergy (i.e., with anaphylaxis) or simply an intolerance.
- For known / diagnosed food allergies / intolerances, find out whether the client has received a clear diagnosis from a health care provider, using valid tests.
- Be aware that food intolerance testing, while helpful, is not a validated test.

How often do you have a bowel movement?

- More than 3 times daily
 1-2 times daily
 A few times a week
 2-3 times daily
 Once every 2-3 days
 Weekly or less

Do you have any digestive system complaints right now? If yes, what are those?

Y N

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Coaching tip

Based on the client's answers here, you can consider using the Medical History & Present Medical Condition Questionnaire.

Hunger cues and appetite

On a scale of 1-10, how would you describe your normal appetite / hunger?

- NEVER HUNGRY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ALWAYS STARVING/ RAVENOUS

Do you feel like you have trouble controlling your appetite / hunger?

- Yes, I feel like I always want food, or eating runs my life
 Sometimes; it depends
 No

Coaching tips

- A client who feels they are often hungry may struggle with emotional / stress eating urges and / or be susceptible to environmental cues.
- However, you may be able to help them with hunger and appetite by simply moving them towards:
 - eating slowly and mindfully;
 - clearly identifying physical hunger and fullness cues (rather than urges to eat, or habitual eating at prescribed times); and
 - choosing less processed, more whole foods.
- Explore your client's dieting history as well. "Always-hungry" clients may be compensating biologically for long periods of deprivation and restriction. They may still be following this pattern of significantly under-eating for days, and then overcompensating later.

Do you normally struggle with food cravings?

- Yes, often Sometimes; it depends No, rarely

If yes or sometimes, what do you normally crave?

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What do you normally do when you have cravings?

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Coaching tips

- Cravings may be part of disordered eating, emotional / stress eating, and / or susceptibility to environmental eating cues.
- They can also signify an underlying health issue (e.g., persistent salt cravings can signify low adrenal function).

Have you ever noticed any connection between your emotions and your eating habits? If yes, what happens?

(e.g., When I'm feeling sad I use food to comfort myself; when I'm happy I notice I have fewer cravings)

Y N

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Have you ever noticed any connection between stress and your eating habits? If yes, what happens?
(e.g., When I'm stressed I eat more / less)



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How often do you think about food and eating (or avoiding eating)?

- Almost always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

If you think about food and eating more than sometimes, what in particular do you think about?

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How often do you eat to the point of being full or stuffed?

- Almost constantly
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Coaching tips

- The questions in this section above can help surface disordered eating habits.
- You may not be able to help directly with this, but you can help your client identify what some of the patterns are. And, if appropriate, refer them out to a qualified eating disorder counselor and / or registered dietitian.

If you feel you've eaten too much, what do you do afterwards? Check all that apply.

- Try to eat less at subsequent meals
- Skip the following meal(s)
- Try to exercise to burn it off
- Feel bad
- Try to get back in control of things
- Purge by vomiting and / or laxatives
- Forget about it and go back to normal eating
- Keep eating... what the heck, already blown it
- Other:

Coaching tip

You're looking here for compensation behaviors, which almost all of these are except for "Forget about it and go back to normal eating".



How often do you skip meals or purposely go a long time without eating?

- Almost always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Coaching tip

Unless you have a client for whom periodic fasting is appropriate, try to move your client towards a normal, somewhat regular eating schedule.

Daily habits and environment

How often do you normally make meals at home?

- 0 meals a day
- 1-2 meals a day
- 3-4 meals a day
- 5 or more meals prepared at home

How often do you normally eat meals in restaurants / cafeterias?

- 0 meals a week
- 1-2 meals a week
- 3-4 meals a week
- All meals eaten in restaurants / cafeterias

How often do you shop for food?

- More than daily
- Daily
- Every other day
- A couple times a week
- Once a week
- Less than once a week
- I never shop for food; it just magically appears in my house

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your food preparation and cooking skills right now?

- TERRIBLE / NONEXISTENT 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXPERT CHEF

Do you like cooking?

- Yes
- Sometimes, if I have the time / energy
- No

If no, what do you NOT like?

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If yes or sometimes, what do you enjoy about it?



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Coaching tips

- Improving food prep and cooking skills is often a simple way to improve clients' eating habits, food repertoire, and overall confidence.
- For clients where shopping, food prep and / or cooking skills are limiting factors:
 - Look for easy, convenient, basic tasks that can have big payoffs (e.g., preparing a slow cooker meal for the next few days, shopping with a list).
 - For clients who absolutely hate cooking / food prep and don't have anyone to do it for them, consider a meal delivery service.
 - Consider using the Kitchen Set-up Assessment to further evaluate client's home kitchen environment.

Your goals and priorities

Thinking about all that you have written down here, what do you think you might like to start working on or addressing first?

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Coaching tips

- Here, the client can set the agenda, with your guidance. Direct their attention to things that you noticed in their answers, and work together to decide on next steps.
- Those steps can be either low-hanging fruit, or most important limiting factors/skills to be addressed.