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Compensatory Eating

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Compensatory eating refers to eating patterns that occur in response to restriction, deprivation, or perceived imbalance—physically or emotionally.

- Eating more after skipping meals
- Strict dieting or “clean eating”
- Overexercising
- Emotional stress combined with restriction
- “I was good all day, so I deserve this”
- “I already messed up, so I might as well keep eating”

What It’s Doing Psychologically and Biologically

- The body and brain attempting to restore balance
- Biological: hunger hormones increase after restriction
- Psychological: deprivation heightens desire and reduces restraint
- Cognitive: all-or-nothing thinking fuels overeating

Summary

- Restriction-driven
- Often delayed, then intense
- Seeks relief from deprivation
- Often after “being good”
- Often follows unmet energy needs