

Table 8.1 From Dalle Grave R & Calugi S, *Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Adolescents with Eating Disorders*, Guilford Press, New York, 2020.

Patient Handout on "Regular Eating"

Regular Eating

Eating regularly is the foundation on which other changes are built. The benefits of regular eating are:

- Providing structure to eating habits and to the day.
- Addressing one of the three forms of strict dieting (i.e., delayed eating, the other two are eliminating foods and reducing portions).
- Interrupt the cycle of binge eating and dietary restriction.

In people who are underweight it can help to improve gastric function and to reduce the early sense of fullness.

To eat regularly, it is necessary to adopt two behaviors:

- 1. Eating at regular intervals throughout the day** (not greater than four hours). You will need to plan in advance three meals plus two or three snacks to be eaten at set times, for example:
 - Breakfast, 8 o'clock.
 - (Mid-morning snack), 10:30.
 - Lunch, 1 o'clock.
 - Afternoon snack, 4 o'clock.
 - Evening meal, 7 o'clock.
 - Evening snack, 10 o'clock.

- 2. Not eating in the gaps**

Points to keep in mind:

- Eat planned meals and snacks, but do not eat between them.
- Do not skip the planned meals and snacks.
- Do not go more than four hours without eating.
- Always know when and what to eat at the next meal or snack.

N.B.: If an unforeseen circumstance prevents you from sticking to your planned meal and snack times, you should be flexible and adapt your mealtime to the situation. Being able to adapt to these unforeseen circumstances will make it possible to manage the various situations in the future requiring a modification of the usual meal and snack time (e.g., work, holidays, dinner invitations etc.). It is important not to skip any meals or snacks, even in the event of unforeseen circumstances.
