

If you reach for chips at the first sign of a crisis, get the majority of your dairy servings from Häagen-Dazs or can't remember the last time you ate breakfast, we need to talk. Whether these bad habits are related to stress, a busy schedule or poor willpower, they're holding you back from having a healthy relationship with food. No more: Read on for smart, dietitian-approved strategies to combat eight common food issues.

BY STACY LEE KONG
PHOTOS BY ROB FIOCCA

Appetite for

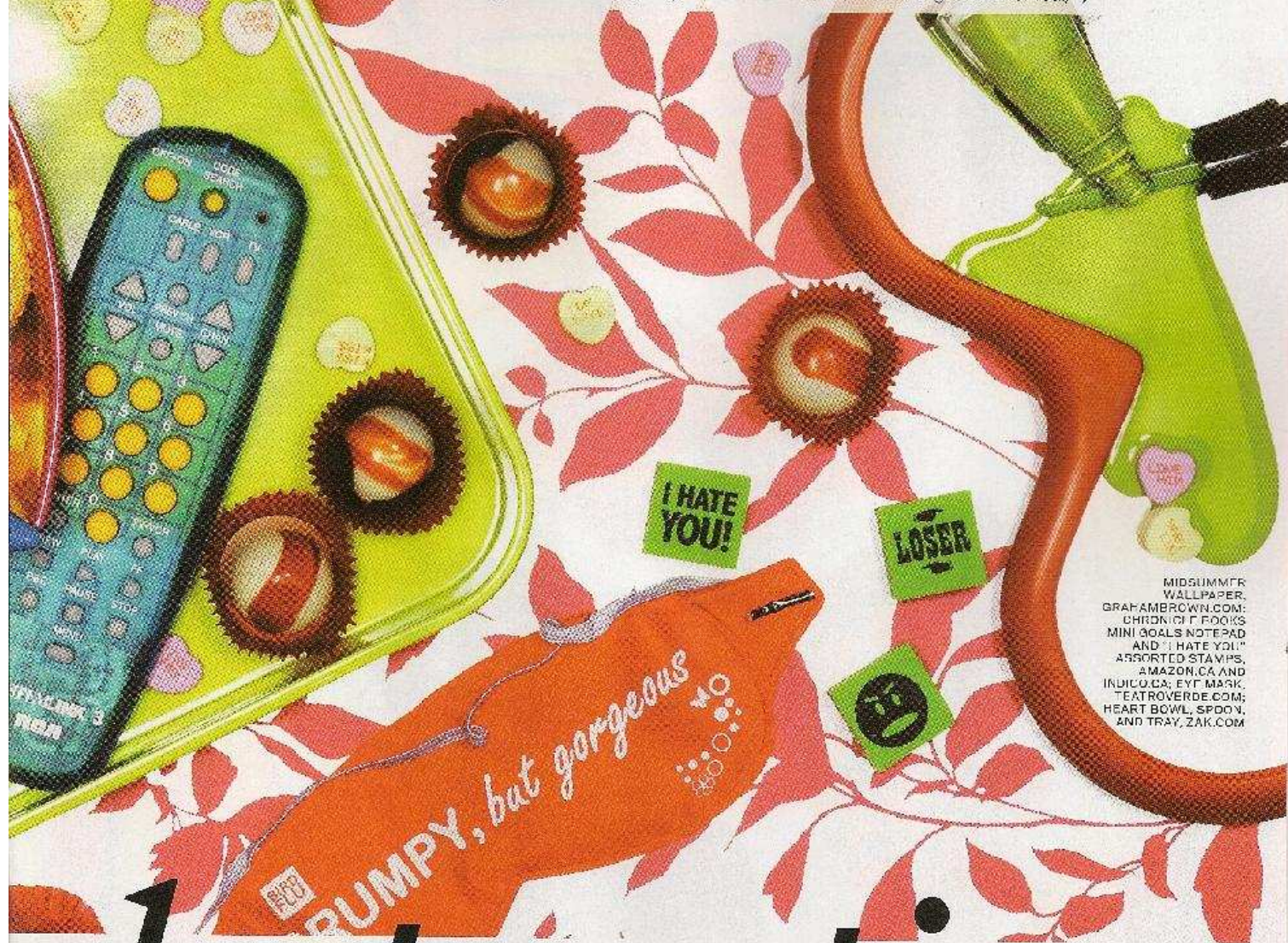
The emotional eater

You reach for the fridge door when you're feeling sad. (Or stressed out. Or anxious.)

THE 411 Food and feelings go hand in hand, and it's not just the memories we associate with certain meals: Research shows that chocolate actually causes our brains to release mood-boosting endorphins, while serotonin-stimulating carbs can induce feelings of calm.

THE FIX "Emotional eating doesn't have to be a clinical disorder," says Sylvia Kerr, a Toronto-based eating-disorder specialist. Instead, it could be a temporary fix for emotional upset. (If that's the case, reach for healthier forms of comfort, like a bowl of chicken noodle soup.) But if seeking solace in food is a long-term habit, consider counselling to get to the root of the problem. The National Eating Disorder Information Centre's directory of service providers (find it at Nedc.ca) can put you in touch with a nearby pro.

YOUR BEST DEFENCE Feeling down? Treat yourself to a warm drink and take the time to sit down and truly enjoy it, recommends Neera Chaudhary, a Toronto-based registered dietician. (Our go-to feel-better bovy: Nativia Organics Chai Tea.) ▶



MIDSUMMER WALLPAPER;
GRAHAMBROWN.COM;
CHRONIC FOODS
MINI GOALS NOTEPAD
AND "I HATE YOU!"
ASSORTED STAMPS,
AMAZON.CA AND
INDICO.CA; EYE MARK,
TEATROVERDE.COM;
HEART BOWL, SPOON,
AND TRAY, ZAK.COM

destruction

GRACE WALLACE/REX
 GYAHAMBROWN.COM
 YELLOW AND ORANGE BOWLS, KIWI
 EGG TRAY, ZAK.COM, DMC-FH20
 LUMIX CAMERA, PANASONIC.CA
 FRED SWIRKO GELUVRES, LITHUS
 SAW, GREEN TOXIC SHILLS COASTLER,
 WWW.ROLSTORE.COM

The social eater

You overeat at restaurants and dinner parties and can never resist the passing canapés at work functions (hello, mini grilled cheese).

THE 411 Food is a big part of connecting with friends and family, and that's not necessarily a bad thing. But if it's leading you to overeat on a regular basis, those extra calories will come back to haunt you.

THE FIX Eat as healthy as possible during the day. An hour before heading out, have a hunger-sating, protein-packed snack — like an apple with a handful of almonds or a cup of plain yogurt with berries. At the event, take a minute to stop and think about what you're eating rather than ordering wildly or polishing off every appetizer that comes your way.

YOUR BEST DEFENCE Instead of eating as you go at cocktail parties, Chauchary suggests filling your plate before you dig in to give yourself a better idea of just how much you're scarfing down.

Celebs — they're just like us! "Anytime there's Mexican food, you can bet I'll be eating it." — *Eva Longoria Parker*