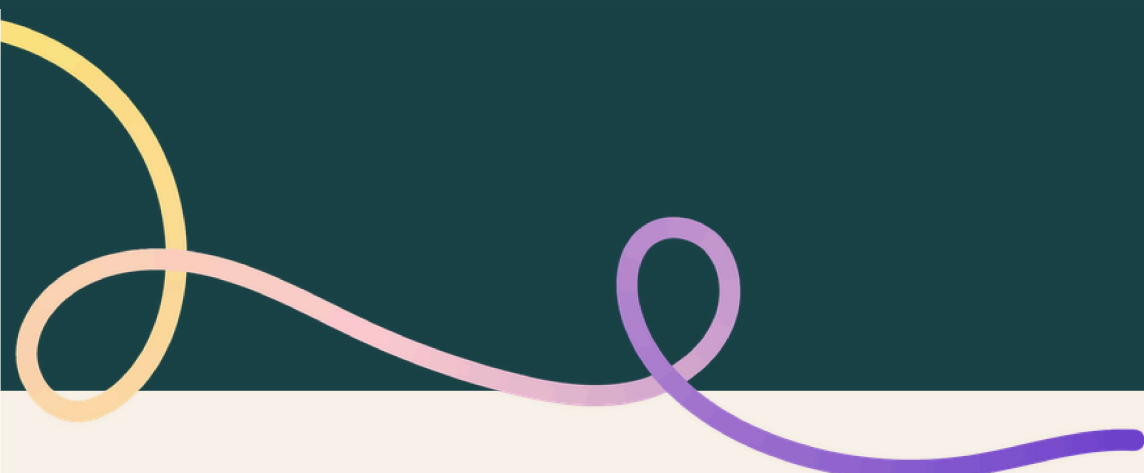


A factsheet about

Eating on the hard days



Understanding  Zoe

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Eating on the hard days

A practical guide for neurodivergent adults and parents. Simple ways to eat on low-capacity days, and to speak up for food needs, your own or your child's.



Match food to your energy

For a lot of neurodivergent people, eating is not always simple. Low energy, executive function, sensory sensitivities and burnout can all get in the way, and none of it is fussiness or laziness. One idea that can help is to stop aiming for the ideal meal and instead match what you eat to the energy you actually have today.

When you have some energy. A good moment for something simple and warm: eggs on toast, a sandwich, or reheating a batch you cooked earlier. Cooking a little extra now gives future-you an easy meal for a harder day.

When you have a little. Reach for food that needs heating but not cooking, such as a frozen meal, something tinned, microwave rice or oats, or crackers and cheese. No-effort is not lazy, it is pacing.

When you have almost none. A drink or a single safe food still counts: a smoothie or milk, a snack you keep within reach, or a food you can eat without thinking. On the hardest days, getting something in is the whole goal.

Speak up about food

When eating somewhere is hard, whether it is you at work or your child at school, and whether the sticking point is a food rule, the timing, or the sensory side of the room, it is reasonable to ask for something that works better. A calm, specific request tends to land best.

Be specific about what is hard. Name the exact sticking point and what would help instead, for you or for your child. A concrete ask is far easier for a school or workplace to act on than a general worry, so lead with the change you want to see.

Ask in writing. A short message alongside any chat gives everyone the same record of what you asked for and what came back. It is reasonable to expect a reply.

Bring people in if it stalls. You are not on your own with this. A support person or advocate can help you put it into words, and you can take it to someone more senior, at the school or workplace, if the first conversation does not shift things.

Make your own easy-meal shortlist

The most useful list is the one in your own words, ready for a day when deciding feels like too much. Fill this in on a good day, keep it on the fridge or your phone, and let it choose for you when you cannot.

My easy-meal shortlist

Something I can grab with zero prep:

Something warm I can heat in minutes:

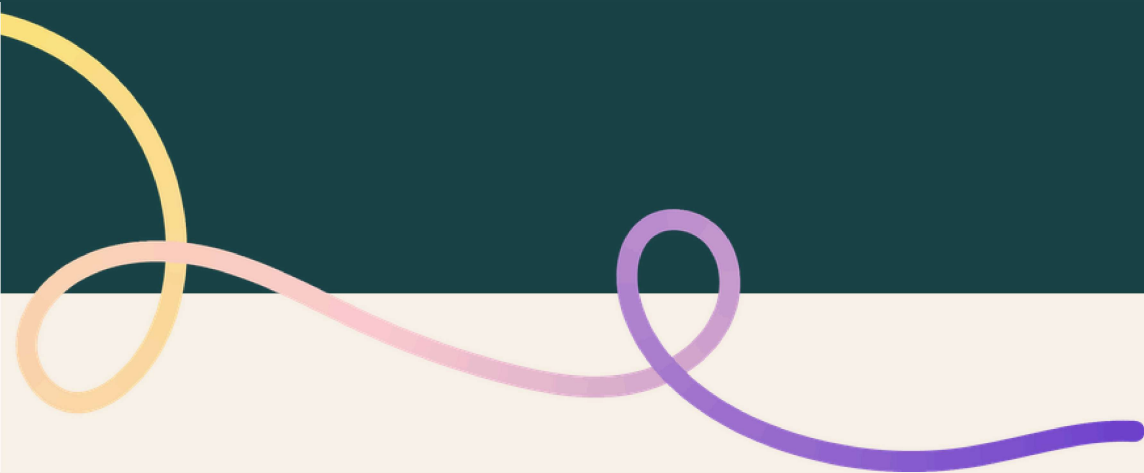
A drink for when food feels like too much:

A comfort food I keep stocked for hard days:

A go-to for when mornings are rough:



Understanding Zoe



Understanding Zoe is the first neuroaffirming AI-powered app that turns every report, observation and moment into an actionable next step, supporting neurodivergent people and those who care about them to thrive.

for more information, you can contact
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