

Mindful Eating

Mindfulness is being aware of yourself and your surroundings. Being present for your meals not only creates a new appreciation for food, but also makes you become more aware of what your mind and body is telling you.

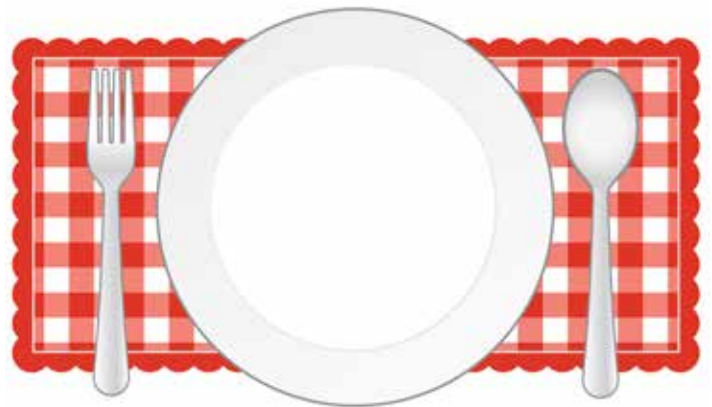
Are you really hungry?

- Are you eating because you're bored? Because you're sad? Because you're happy? Because you're stressed?
- ...Because everyone else is eating?
- ...Just because it's in front of you?
- Are you eating hot foods because you're cold? Are you eating cold foods because you're hot?

*Before you pick up another chip, be aware of **why** you want to eat. **Drink a glass of water, wait 20 minutes, and see if you are still hungry.** Many people mistake thirst for hunger. Recognizing your feelings associated with food can help you control your urges to eat when you're not really hungry.*

Common Triggers for Overeating and Methods for Coping

Stress:	Find other outlets for stress, like exercising or calling a friend.
Emotions:	Recognize your feelings and reach out to somebody.
Waiting too long between meals:	Pack a healthy snack, such as fruit or nuts, so you do not go hungry for more than 4 hours .
Not eating balanced meals:	Incorporate protein, fats, and carbohydrates into each meal to increase satiety.



Practicing Mindfulness

- Stay present
- Pay attention to your feelings and surroundings
- Don't judge yourself: accept your feelings and emotions
- If your mind strays, bring it back to the present

Mindfulness in the Kitchen

- Instead of focusing on getting food on the table quickly, try to enjoy the cooking process
- We taste and smell food, but try to use your other senses too
- Think about what ingredients you choose to cook with and why

Practicing Mindful Eating

- Stop eating when you're full
- Pay attention to how your stomach feels as you eat by pausing to let the food settle
- Try to only eat when you're hungry and not when other factors influence you
- Sit and enjoy your meal with your family if possible. Watching TV while eating often causes overeating

Taking small steps in mindfulness will help empower you mentally and physically. Try applying one of these concepts before or during your meals and see how it changes your eating habits!

Before you eat

- Choose a place to eat where you can concentrate on your meal and see how it changes your eating habits! Whether you are at your desk, in your car, or cooking for your family, stop what you are doing, take a 15-minute break, and eat somewhere.
- Pay attention to the moment. People tend to eat more when they are multi-tasking.
- Take a minute, close your eyes, and take a deep breath. Whatever is going on in your life, this is your time to relax and put aside your stresses.
- Choose foods you enjoy and that will nourish your body.
- Choose small plates and utensils. We always want to finish our plate, whether big or small, so choose smaller plates to remove the urge to complete a big meal. This can trick your mind into thinking you've eaten a larger meal.

During your meal

- Use all your senses, sight, smell, taste, hearing, and touch, to appreciate your food.
- Chew slowly. Make every bite count.
- If you are still hungry, it's okay to make another plate. Ask yourself if you are eating to nourish your body or to just eat.

