

How to be a more mindful eater

Mindful eating

■ What is it?

- Paying attention or being fully aware of what you are eating and drinking
 - How food affects your body
 - Do certain foods give you a stomach ache or make you feel tired?
 - How your mood affects what you eat
 - Do you eat out of stress, boredom, anxiety or are you truly hungry?
- Think of your food choices as a way to nourish your body

■ Why should we be mindful when we are eating?

- Encourages us to slow down and reminds us to take care of ourselves, even when life gets busy
- Forces you to pay attention to what you are eating and why
- Can decrease stress eating and binging

■ Research suggests that mindful eating helps improve food choices and may promote better weight management.

Why do we eat?

■ Many reasons we eat

■ Those who struggle with food react subconsciously to food and unrecognized trigger, thoughts and feelings

■ When you eat, ask yourself?

- Am I hungry?
- Am I bored?
- Do I feel stressed?
- Do I feel emotional?

■ Apple test of hunger: "Am I hungry enough to eat an apple?" If the answer is no, you're probably not hungry.

Pay attention to your body

■ Pay attention to your hunger cues and when you are actually hungry

■ Goal: to be between a 3 and 6 on the hunger scale at all times

■ Make note of where you are on the hunger scale

- Before and after meals and snacks
- This will help you determine if you are actually hungry when you eat and if you eat too much at meal times

The Hunger Scale



Tips for mindful eating

1. Eat at the table as often as you can

- This allows for more of the focus on food
- More likely to choose better-for-us foods when we sit down
- You also build stronger relationships with family and friends!

2. Make food the primary attraction

- Limit screen use during dinner
- Distracted eating limits our ability to listen to our body and send hunger / fullness cues

3. Slow Down!

- Savor your meal and pay attention to the flavors and textures of your meal
- It takes 20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain it's full and most Americans finish a meal in 7 minutes or less

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