

Department of
NUTRITION & DIETETICS

Mindful Eating



Understanding Mindful Eating

Eating is a pleasurable experience. Mindful eating can help you gain control of your eating habits. Research has shown that it can promote weight loss and reduce binge eating.

Mindful eating means paying full attention to your food when eating. Here are some tips to help you cultivate mindful eating habits:

- ✓ Avoid multi-tasking when eating (e.g. using your phone or watching television).
- ✓ Be conscious of your body sensations when eating (e.g. the taste of the food).
- ✓ Eat only when you are hungry and stop eating when you are full.
- ✓ Pay attention to your food and allow more time for the feeling of fullness to reach your brain.

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Tips for During Meals/Snack Time

Ensure that your eating environment is free from distractions. Take five deep breaths to prepare yourself before you begin eating. Have some water and notice three things that you see around you.

1. Ask yourself how hungry you are (use "The Hunger Scale" on next page). Notice what is on your plate before you start eating. Pay attention to the smell, texture, appearance and amount of food on your plate.
2. Chew 30 times per mouthful until the food is totally fluid. Put down your cutlery after each mouthful to taste each bite. Ask yourself if you like the taste, texture and flavour of the food. Do these change while you are chewing? Pay attention to any emotions and thoughts that come to your mind while you are eating.
3. Regularly track your hunger. Only take the next spoonful of food after you have finished chewing and swallowing.

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Tips for Before Meals/Snack Time

The Hunger Scale



- Avoid pressuring yourself to finish your food when you reach a score of 8 on the Hunger Scale. Have your meal before you reach a score of 2 on the Hunger Scale.
- Learn to recognise physical hunger cues (e.g. stomach growling, growing sensation of hunger).

Tips for Outside of Meals/Snack Time

- Avoid eating out of large packages or containers. Portion out the amount you intend to have.
- Eliminate distractions. Focus on the taste, texture, smell and appearance of each bite. Chew well and enjoy your food.
- Avoid eating out of boredom, stress, anger, depression, and/or anxiety.

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Reasons For Eating	How to Overcome it
Boredom/ Non-hungry/ Emotional/ Stress Eating	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Use the Hunger Scale to determine how hungry you are before eating. Consider if your next action will bring you closer to or further away from your diet/weight goal. Alternatively, consider if there is anything else you can do to keep yourself on track in achieving your diet/weight goal (e.g. increase exercise).2. Keep your home or working environment free from snacks.3. Engage in relaxing activities (e.g. watching television, talking to a friend, heading out for some fresh air).4. Identify what triggers your reasons for eating and plan how to avoid them.
Head Hunger (Cravings)/ Environmental Factors	<p>Remember: food cravings tend to subside within 15-30 minutes without doing anything. Learn to accept the feeling and remember that you always have a choice.</p> <p>You can distract yourself by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Drinking a glass of water and waiting 20 minutes to see if the craving goes away.2. Engaging in other pleasurable activities.3. Taking five long, deep breaths.

Mindful Eating Journal

Food journaling can be useful when you are practicing mindful eating. It can help you remember what you have consumed and if the meal was too much, or too little. It also helps you realise if you are eating out of boredom rather than hunger.

Date/Time	What I Consumed	Hunger Scale (From 1 to 10)		My Thoughts/ Feelings	What was I Doing
		Before Eating	After Eating		

The Hunger Scale



Mindful Eating Journal

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The Hunger Scale



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