

Mindful Eating

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness means being fully aware of what is going on within and around you at each moment. Mindfulness can be applied to many aspects of life. Being mindful of your eating may help with weight management. Being mindful involves being aware of yourself and your surroundings physically, emotionally, and mentally. It means paying attention to each changing moment.



What is Mindful Eating?

Mindful eating takes the concept of mindfulness and applies it to why, when, where, what, and how you eat. This means being aware of both the physical and emotional feelings connected to eating.

- **Observe your body.** Notice hunger and fullness signals that guide you to start and stop eating.
- **Do not judge yourself** or your reaction to food.
- **Notice your reaction to food.** What do you like, what don't you like?
- **Savor your food.** While eating, notice all of the colors, smells, flavors, and textures of the food.

Mindfulness may help you to avoid overeating. First bites may be the most satisfying, and additional bites may not be as pleasurable. This can help with portion control.



Be aware. Ask yourself, “Am I...”

- Physically hungry? (on a scale from “1” to “10”)
- Eating quickly or slowly?
- Dining in-the-moment—Am I mindlessly munching or noticing each bite?
- Multi-tasking, or truly focused on this meal or snack?
- Feeling my stomach rumbling?
- Bored, stressed, tired, anxious, angry, sad, etc.?

Here are some tips:

- Take a breath and ask yourself, “Am I truly hungry?,” before you reach for food.
- Begin practicing mindfulness. Start by eating one meal a day in a slower, more aware manner.
- Focus on eating. Avoid doing other activities while you eat (working, talking on the phone, watching TV, driving, reading, etc.).
- Set a timer for 20 minutes and take the whole time to eat the meal.
- Eat silently for 5 minutes (think about what it took to produce that meal, from the sun and water, to the farmer, to the grocer, to the cook).
- Slow down. Eat with your non-dominant hand or try using chopsticks.

