

THE PRINCIPLES OF MINDFUL EATING

Principles of Mindfulness:

- Mindfulness is deliberately paying attention, non-judgmentally.
- Mindfulness encompasses both internal processes and external environments.
- Mindfulness is being aware of what is present for you mentally, emotionally and physically in each moment.
- With practice, mindfulness cultivates the possibility of freeing yourself of reactive, habitual patterns of thinking, feeling and acting.
- Mindfulness promotes balance, choice, wisdom and acceptance of what is.



Mindful Eating is:



- Allowing yourself to become aware of the positive and nurturing opportunities that are available through food preparation and consumption by respecting your own inner wisdom.
- Choosing to eat food that is both pleasing to you and nourishing to your body by using all your senses to explore, savor and taste.
- Acknowledging responses to food (likes, neutral or dislikes) without judgment.
- Learning to be aware of physical hunger and satiety cues to guide your decision to begin eating and to stop eating.

Someone Who Eats Mindfully:

- Acknowledges that there is no right or wrong way to eat but varying degrees of awareness surrounding the experience of food.
- Accepts that his/her eating experiences are unique.
- Is an individual who by choice, directs his/her awareness to all aspects of food and eating on a moment-by-moment basis.
- Is an individual who looks at the immediate choices and direct experiences associated with food and eating: not to the distant health outcome of that choice.
- Is aware of and reflects on the effects caused by unmindful eating.
- Experiences insight about how he/she can act to achieve specific health goals as he/she becomes more attuned to the direct experience of eating and feelings of health.
- Becomes aware of the interconnection of earth, living beings, and cultural practices and the impact of his/her food choices has on those systems.



BASICS OF MINDFUL EATING



The BASICS of Mindful Eating provide a guideline for you to practice “sit down and just eat.” The BASICS acronym can guide you before, during, and after eating. Practicing with these instructions can change the way you eat forever. It’s people’s favorite take-away from my class.

B stands for Breathe and Belly Check Before You Eat. Before you eat, take five deep breaths. Notice whether you have sensations of physical hunger, like mild gurgling or gnawing in the stomach. How hungry are you? What are you hungry for? Maybe you’re hungry, or maybe you’re bored, tired, or stressed. If you’re physically hungry, take your time to choose food that you can enjoy and savor. If you’re not, maybe there is something else your body is wanting, like movement or rest.

A stands for Assess Your Food. What does your food look like? Notice the colors. Does it look appealing? What does it smell like? Where does it come from? Is it whole and unprocessed, or is it highly processed? Is this the food you really want? A brief pause to assess can give you lots of information.

S stands for Slow Down. After you’ve determined that you’re physically hungry and you’ve chosen what to eat, slowing down can help you enjoy your food and be more attentive to when your body is telling you it has had enough. To slow down, put down your fork or spoon between bites, pause and take a breath between bites, and chew your food completely.

I stands for Investigate Your Hunger Throughout the Meal. Be aware of your distractions and keep bringing your attention back to eating, savoring, and assessing your hunger and satiety throughout the meal. Halfway through, you may discover you are no longer hungry, even if there’s still food on your plate. Give yourself permission to stop or to continue eating based on awareness of your hunger and satiety cues.

C stands for Chew Your Food Thoroughly. Pay attention to the multitude of sensations available to you as you chew. When you’ve chewed your food thoroughly, your body will process the food more efficiently and get more nutritional value from it. When your body has been nutritionally fed, it will tell you by dispelling your hunger cues. Chewing thoroughly also helps you to slow down and taste, improves, dental health, and spares your belly the discomfort of indigestion.

S stands for Savor Your Food. Food is a wonderful part of our lives. Savoring your food means taking time to choose food you really like and that would satisfy you right now, picking food that honors your body and your taste buds, and being fully present for the experience of eating and taking pleasure in that experience. Every time you sit down to eat can be an opportunity to savor.