

# 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 bingeing

### ■ 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

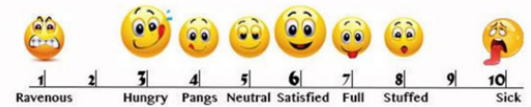
### ■ Pay attention to your hunger cues and when you are actually hungry

### ■ 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

 **registered dietitian team**

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