

What is mindful eating?

Mindful eating means paying full attention to the present moment as you choose, prepare, and eat your food. It means using all your senses to explore, savor, and enjoy food. When you eat mindfully you are aware that food is more than just something to fill you up and you listen to hunger and fullness cues inside of your body.

What are the benefits of mindful eating?

- Establishing a healthy relationship with food.
- Responding to food cravings in balanced ways.
- Improving self-acceptance and self-management.

How do I practice mindful eating?

Notice your hunger and fullness signs:

- Start eating before you feel uncomfortably hungry.
- Pause and do a hunger check. When we eat, it takes about 20 minutes before our brain gets the memo that we have enough energy and are physically full.
- Stop eating when you are pleasantly satisfied and comfortably full instead of feeling stuffed. If you are satisfied stop eating before your plate is clean, the snack bag is empty, or the TV show is over.

Eliminate distractions before sitting down at the table

Avoid eating without really paying attention to your food, for example, eating while watching TV, playing video games, reading, or checking messages on your phone.

Slow down and focus on enjoyment when eating

- Pay close attention to your senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. This will help you be more aware of the whole experience of eating.

- Allow for meals to take 20-30 minutes. This is usually about the time you need to eat and know if you are satisfied.
- Bring all your sensations when holding, eating, chewing the food.

Eat with curiosity, awareness, and non-judgment

This will help you build a healthy relationship with food.

- Be aware of the difference between eating to nourish your body versus eating for enjoyment.
- Explore new foods, making new foods both approachable and fun.

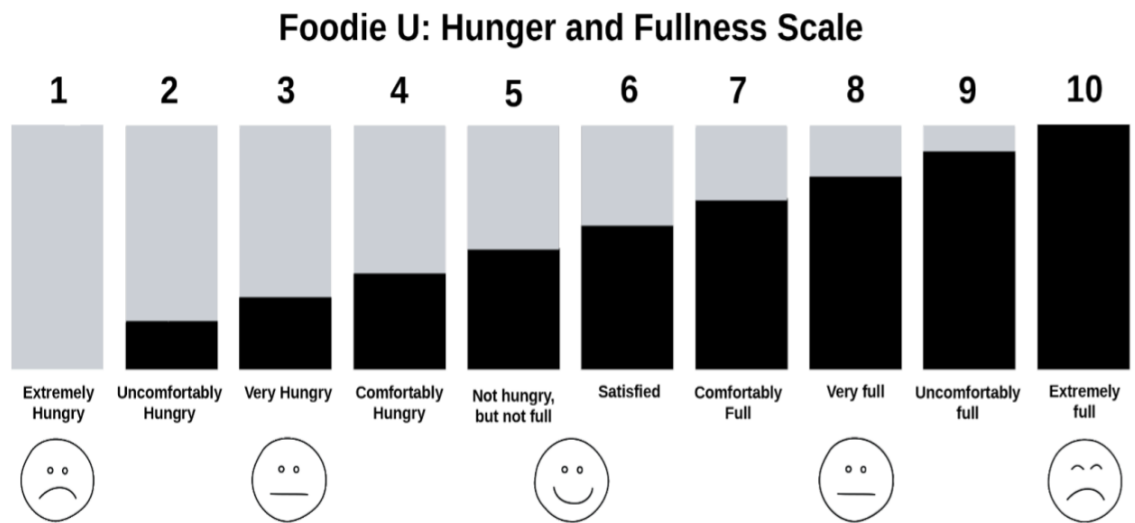
How can I practice mindful eating with my family members?

Activity 1: activate your sensational senses

- Ask yourself these questions:
 - What's the first thing I usually do when presented with food?
 - Have I ever eaten a snack while playing video games? watching TV? Reading?
 - What did it taste like? Have I ever noticed that?
- Place a snack in front of you and eat it with all your senses. Describe the experience to a family member starting with the outside, and then inside of the food:
 - What you see: the color, shape, and texture of the food.
 - What you feel with your fingers and tongue.
 - What you hear as you open, cut, peel or chew the food.
 - What you smell before/as/after you open, cut, or peel the food.
 - How the food taste and if the taste changes as you bite, chew, and swallow the food.
- Tell your family member:
 - How this experience was different from the way you usually eat food. Think of the differences between eating in a distracting environment or with full attention.
 - How did it feel when you ate food with your full senses, what did you like about it?

Activity 2: hunger and fullness scale

- Use the scale to describe your hunger and decide when and how much to eat before you sit down.



- Do hunger checks during eating to know if you are still hungry.
- After you finish your meal, tell your family members how your stomach feels. Are you still hungry? satisfied? full?
- Learn to start eating when you feel hungry and stop when you feel satisfied. Try not to overfill your stomach.

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