



Mindful Eating

Visit Fourteen



Table of Contents

Mindfulness 3

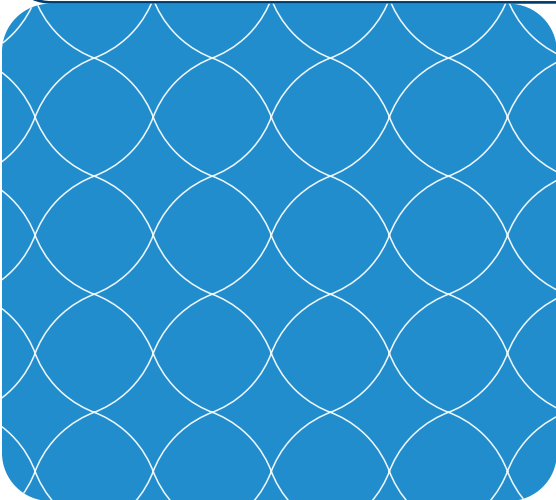
Mindful Eating 3

 Become a Mindful Eater 3

Mindless Eating 4

 Stop Mindless Eating 4

The Eating Cycle 5



Content for this guide was adapted from information provided by Healthwise by WebMD Ignite.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness means paying close attention to what you are doing right now. It is about being in the moment and noticing what is happening around you and inside you.

It can help you slow down, feel calm, and handle stress better. It also helps you see the good things in your life and feel thankful.

Some people practice mindfulness by sitting quietly and focusing on their breathing. They notice how the air feels going in and out. If their mind wanders, they gently bring their focus back to their breath.

But you do not have to sit still to be mindful. You can be mindful while walking, listening to music, or even eating.




Mindful Eating

Mindful eating is simply bringing that same attention and presence to your food.

Instead of rushing through a meal, you slow down and notice:

- The texture of the food
- The flavor – is it sweet, salty, tart?
- The sensation of chewing and swallowing
- How your body feels as you eat

 For example, when eating a slice of apple, you might focus on the crispness, the juiciness, and how long the taste lasts. You become curious about the experience, rather than distracted or rushed.

Mindful eating helps you:

- Enjoy your food more
- Recognize when you are full
- Make healthier choices
- Feel gratitude for the nourishment

Become a Mindful Eater

Am I Really Hungry?

- Pay attention to signs like feeling grouchy, having a headache, or an empty feeling in your belly.
- Do not just listen to your stomach. It can also react to feelings like stress or sadness.
- If you think you are hungry but you are not sure, try:
 - Drinking a glass of water
 - Making a cup of tea
 - Lying down and resting for 10 minutes
 - Taking deep breaths to calm down

What am I Hungry for?

- Are you hungry for something sweet, salty, sour, savory, hot, warm, cold, hard, or soft?
- What is a healthy choice for what you are hungry for?

continued on next page

Do I Eat Too Fast?

- Sit down at a table when you eat.
- Take your time and do not rush.
- Turn off the TV, computer, and phone so you can focus on your food.
- Enjoy your meal – whether you are with family or by yourself.

Think About What You Are Eating

- Make the first bite of each meal a mindful bite.
- Ask yourself:
 - “Where did this food come from?”
 - “Who helped get it to my plate?”
- Use all 5 senses (seeing, smelling, touching, hearing, and tasting) while you eat:
 - Look at the shape and color of the food before you eat.
 - Smell each food before the first bite. What does it remind you of?
 - Notice how it feels in your mouth – soft, crunchy, smooth, rough.
 - Listen to the food as you bit and chew.
 - Taste the flavors – sweet, salty, sour, creamy.

Eat Only What You Enjoy

- Do not eat food just because it is there.
- It is okay to leave food on your plate if you are full.
- Help make meals for yourself and your family – even if it is just putting together healthy snacks or easy meals.
- Home-cooked meals can be cheaper, taste better, and be healthier. You can use your favorite spices and flavors.

Give Your Brain Time

- It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to know your belly is full.
- Try to take at least 20 minutes to eat your meal.
- After eating, go for a walk or stretch your body.

Pay Attention to Hunger Cues

- Notice the real signs of hunger, like feeling tired or having an empty belly.
- Be aware of things that might trick you into eating when you are not hungry – like seeing snacks or feeling upset.
- Make a plan to help you stay mindful when those things happen.

Mindless Eating

Mindless eating means eating without paying attention.

It is when you:

- Eat just because food is in front of you
- Keep eating even if you are not hungry
- Snack while watching TV or playing on the computer or phone
- Do not notice how the food tastes or how full you feel

When you eat mindlessly, you might eat too much or not enjoy your food as much. Being a mindful

eater means slowing down, noticing your food, and stopping when you feel full.

Stop Mindless Eating

Mindless eating means eating without paying attention.

Ask Yourself: Am I Hungry?

- Do not eat just because there is food there or it is mealtime.

continued on next page

Do Not Wait Until You Are Too Hungry

- Eat a small snack if you are too hungry, then slow down.

Pick Healthy Foods You Enjoy

- Do not eat more just because it is low-fat or low-calorie.

Use Smaller Plates and Bowls

- You will eat less food if your plates and bowls are smaller.

Use Smaller Serving Spoons

- Smaller serving spoons also help you take less food.

Put Food on Plates or in Bowls

- Do not eat straight from boxes or bags. Food tastes better on a plate and you will likely eat less.

Buy Smaller Containers of Food

- People eat more food when it comes in bigger containers. Try buying smaller containers or serving yourself smaller portions to help you avoid eating too much.

Be Careful with Big Drinks

- Some super-sized drinks can have a lot of calories. Water is the best drink when you are thirsty.

Stop Eating When You Feel Full

- You do not have to finish everything on your plate. Save the rest for later.

Move More During the Day

- Try to move more: take the stairs, walk while talking on the phone, stretch during commercials, or go for a walk outside.

The Eating Cycle

This cycle helps you can be mindful about your eating patterns so you can make choices that feel good and support your health.l.

Why Do I Eat?

Sometimes we eat because we are hungry. Other times, we eat because we are bored, stressed, sad, or just because food is there.

Ask yourself:

- Am I really hungry?
- What makes me want to eat when I am not hungry?
- Have I tried diets that made me feel restricted or led to overeating?

Helpful tip:

Hunger is a physical feeling. It is not the same as cravings or wanting food for comfort.



continued on next page

When Do I Feel Like Eating?

We often eat at certain times or in certain places, even if we are not hungry.

Ask yourself:

- When do I usually feel like eating?
- Can I tell when I am truly hungry?
- What can I do instead of eating when I am not hungry?

Helpful tip:

Try doing something else — like stretching, calling a friend, or taking a walk — until you feel hungry.

What Do I Eat?

All foods can fit into a healthy life. It is about balance, variety, and moderation.

Ask yourself:

- What do I eat in a typical day?
- Do I avoid certain foods, then overeat them later?
- What small change could I make to eat better?

Helpful tip:

Ask yourself: *What do I want? What do I need? What do I have?*

How Do I Eat?

Eating while distracted can lead to eating too fast or too much.

Ask yourself:

- Do I eat while watching TV or working?
- Do I eat fast or differently when I am alone?

Helpful tip:

Eat slowly, enjoy each bite, and stop when you feel satisfied - not stuffed.



How Much Do I Eat?

Eating more than your body needs can leave you feeling tired or uncomfortable.

Ask yourself:

- How do I feel after eating?
- What makes me eat more than I need?

Helpful tip:

Your stomach is about the size of your fist. You do not need a lot to feel full.

Where Do I Use My Energy?

Food gives you energy. Where you spend that energy matters.

Ask yourself:

- Am I active during the day?
- What do I enjoy doing?
- What are my goals for my health, relationships, or life?

Helpful tip:

When you stay busy doing things you enjoy, you do not need food to help you feel better.

Notes



[WellSpan.org](https://www.wellspan.org)

