

To be **mindful** is to use our minds to look inside, outside and all around - to consider our actions and how they affect ourselves, others and the world around us.

Mindfulness is usually associated with meditation and stress relief but it can also be a powerful tool when choosing what we eat, how we're eating and how our choices affect our health and that of our environment. Just ask yourself **who, what, when, where and how...**

WHAT

What are you eating? Pay attention to food labels, ingredient lists and sourcing. Avoid foods that trigger a stress response in your body, namely refined sugars and carbohydrates. If you see these in the first 5 ingredients, find something else. Remember you are what you eat and also what you eat eats. Opt for quality over quantity.

WHY

Why are you eating? Are you hungry? Stressed out? Sad? Celebrating? Keep a food journal and watch for trends in your eating habits. You may discover that you eat more high-fat, high-calorie foods when you are stressing. If you are aware of this trend you will be able to look for other ways to relieve stress that don't involve energy-dense foods that may ultimately be leading to your weight gain.

WHEN

When are you eating? Avoid skipping meals if possible. Instead, try to evenly space your meals and snacks throughout the day, which will be easier on your body's digestive system.

WHO AND WHERE

Who is growing your food where does your food come from? Several factors affect nutrition content such as variety, production method, post-harvest handling, storage and transportation. Most often local food will be higher in nutrition content simply because it has travelled a shorter distance and the varieties chosen are for taste, not shelf stability.

HOW

How are you eating? This is perhaps the most important part. Engage your five senses and slow down to really appreciate and savor the experience. Eating is very sensual and perhaps our greatest weapon against disease.

Mindful Eating



Mindless Eating

- Sitting down
- Eating slowly
- Savoring each bite
- Focused on the meal
- Not multitasking
- Listening to hunger cues (hungry, satisfied, full)

- Emotional eating
- Grazing without tasting each bite
- Eating on schedule whether you're hungry or not
- Skipping meals
- Not paying attention to hunger cues
- Multitasking (watching TV, driving, etc)
- Binging then feeling guilty

"When walking, walk. When eating, eat."

- Rashaski Zen Proverb