

Kick Comfort Cravings

Mindless eating is eating in response to something other than hunger. Mindless eating means not paying attention to your body's hunger and fullness signals.

There are many reasons you might eat mindlessly. For example:

- **You feel sad, mad, tired, bored, and/or lonely.** You might treat yourself to a large dessert when you are feeling sad to make yourself feel better.
- **You see or smell a food that looks tempting.** You're full from dinner but get a large tub of popcorn at the movies because it smells so good.
- **You're used to eating at certain times, even though you're not necessarily hungry at those times.** You eat lunch at 12pm because it's "lunch time" even though you aren't really hungry for lunch because you had a late breakfast.
- **You are doing something else while eating.** You snack while watching TV and lose track of how much you ate or how it even tasted.

Mindful eating is eating with awareness, which involves paying attention to your body's signals. This means allowing yourself to eat when you are hungry and knowing to stop when you are full.

Mindful eating tips:

- **Remember that mindful eating takes practice** *but it's never about being perfect!*
- **Eat slowly.** It takes about 20 minutes for your body to realize that it is full. So try to make the meal last for at least 20 minutes.
- **Portion out food before you eat it** rather than eating straight from a bag, carton, or other container.
- **Use smaller size plates and glasses** to help you serve healthy portion sizes.
- **Avoid skipping meals.** Don't let yourself get to the point when you are starving because this could trigger you to overeat.
- **Check in with yourself.** Pause in the middle of eating to check in with your body and to assess how hungry/or satisfied you are.
- **Stop and sit down** while you eat.
- **Avoid distractions** and focus on just the food; take some deep breaths before you start eating in order to focus on something other than external stimulus such as your phone or computer.
- **Enjoy!**

Eating mindfully is a way to improve your eating habits and overall well-being. Practice mindful eating by paying attention to your hunger and fullness before, during, and after meal and snack times.



Provided in collaboration with the North Ottawa Wellness Foundation.
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Track Your Cravings

You can use the following chart to help you become aware of your eating habits, including what may be triggering you to eat. After observing the trends for a week or two, use the ideas provided to help you address one issue at a time. Remember....this is a process! Perfection is not the goal. Improving your overall ability to handle stress and stay healthy is the objective.

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