

MindFUL Eating vs. MindLESS Eating

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Hot off the Press

- ▶ Daily Energy Expenditure Through the Human Life Course; Pontzer, et al; *Science*, Aug. 13, 2021
- ▶ N = 6600
- ▶ Ages 8 days to 95 years, men and women from 29 countries
- ▶ Metabolism very fast up until 1 yo, then slowly declines until 20 yo, then starts to slow (0.7%/year)
- ▶ 90 yo burns about 25% fewer calories
- ▶ Slow down not just because of loss of muscle mass, but cells start to slow down
- ▶ Bottomline: we have a choice about our 'bottom line'

What's new?



Question 1

- ▶ How much more soup did people eat when their soup bowl kept filling up without their knowledge?
- ▶ A. 13%
- ▶ B. 53%
- ▶ C. 73%
- ▶ **Answer: C - just like if you were eating out of bag or box, without signal of how much, we can overeat**



Question 2

- ▶ When 2 glasses had the same capacity, into which glass did people pour the most liquid?
- ▶ A. short, wide glass
- ▶ B Tall, narrow glass
- ▶ **Answer: A - 25-30% more into short, wide tumblers - in tall, skinny glass, looks like more**



Question 3

- ▶ How did the size of plate or bowl influence people's perception of amount when they were offered the same portion size?
- ▶ A. Made no difference in the amount they thought they ate
- ▶ B. Thought they ate more when served on large plate or bowl
- ▶ C. Thought they ate more when served on small plate/bowl
- ▶ **Answer: C - large dish makes portions look smaller**

Question 4

- ▶ How did the number of chocolates people ate from covered, desktop candy dishes compare when the dishes were clear vs. when the dishes were white?
- ▶ A. Same from both dishes
- ▶ B. Ate more from white dish
- ▶ C. Ate more from clear dish
- ▶ **Answer: C 71% more (7.7 vs 4.6 candies) from clear dish**



Question 5

- ▶ At which location did people eat the most candy from a clear, lidded candy dish?
- ▶ A. corner of desk
- ▶ B. Top left-hand desk drawer
- ▶ C. On a file cabinet six feet from the desk
- ▶ D. They ate the same amount from all locations
- ▶ **Answer: A 9 candies vs 6 (in drawer) vs 4 across room**



We eat for many reasons...

Pleasure

Stress

Cultural Norms

Comfort

Fatigue

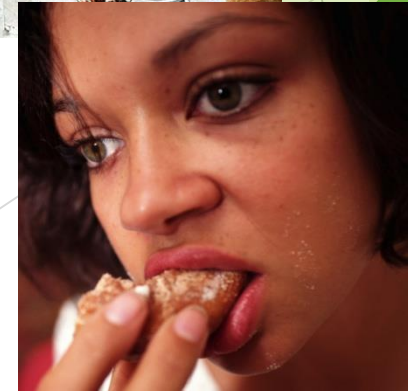
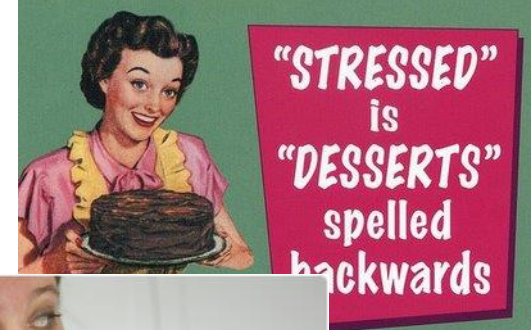
Anger

Boredom

Social

Anxiety

Habit



What is the one reason why we should eat?



MindLESS Eating

- ▶ Using external cues to shape our food choices and timing
- ▶ Eating because...
 - ▶ It's noon
 - ▶ I see it - it looks good
 - ▶ It smells good
 - ▶ I haven't finished what I was served
 - ▶ It's free (or to get my money's worth)
 - ▶ It is what I always do (i.e. go to the movies, need popcorn)



MindLESS Eating



- ▶ Focuses on the next bite and the environment
- ▶ Lowers awareness of amount of food you consume
- ▶ Can't assess hunger/fullness
- ▶ Disrupts mind/body connection
- ▶ Signals that regulate intake aren't sensed
- ▶ Leads to overeating

MindFUL Eating

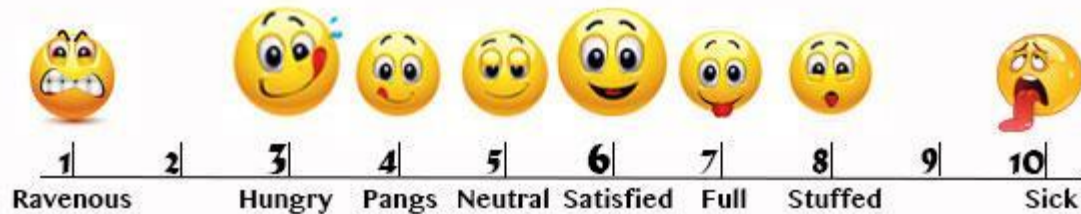
- ▶ *Eating with intention while paying attention*
- ▶ Choosing foods you enjoy and that nourish your body
- ▶ Tuning all your senses into that food
- ▶ Aware of level of hunger and satiety
- ▶ Get more satisfaction out of less food
- ▶ Awareness of why I am eating:
 - ▶ Comfort
 - ▶ Emotions
 - ▶ Sad, glad, mad....= Emotional eating



Eating Mindfully

- Mindful 'Eat-Mojis'
- Rank your level of hunger before you eat and half way through the meal
- If you are a 6 or greater, then stop eating
- If <6 , then eat slowly until you are satisfied

The Hunger Scale



Slow down

- ▶ Give brain time to register that you are full
- ▶ Put utensils down between bites
- ▶ Sip water between bites
- ▶ Take small bites and chew thoroughly
- ▶ Finish chewing and swallowing before filling up fork again



Practice Mindful Bites

- ▶ Look at the food before you eat it
- ▶ Think about what it is, where it came from
- ▶ Note the color, texture, temperature
- ▶ Intentionally put it in your mouth
- ▶ Notice how it feels and tastes in your mouth
- ▶ Start to chew and notice how it changes
- ▶ Think about swallowing it before your swallow
- ▶ The experience is this bite - not the next one



Environmental Control

– What are your cues?

- ▶ Chips in cupboard
- ▶ Goodies at the movies
- ▶ Drinks at social events
- ▶ Snacking after dinner
- ▶ Game night/Bunko
- ▶ Finger foods
- ▶ Dessert after dinner
- ▶ Boredom
- ▶ TV
- ▶ Buffets

Options:

Stay away from cue?

Find a replacement?

Get rid of the trigger food?

Respond differently to cues?

Strategies to avoid mindless eating

- ▶ Set up your world to support your healthy eating behaviors
- ▶ Keep high fat/high calorie foods out of your house and work place
- ▶ At least keep them out of sight
- ▶ Keep lower fat/calories choices easy to reach, in sight and ready to eat
- ▶ Limit your eating to just one place
- ▶ Limit other activities when you eat



Strategies for Emotional Eating

- ▶ Be aware of why you are eating
- ▶ H A L T!
- ▶ Take a 10 minute 'time out'
- ▶ Pause and observe
- ▶ Distract
- ▶ Express the emotion
- ▶ Learn your triggers
- ▶ Move
- ▶ Practice deep breathing

Hungry
Angry
Lonely
Tired

Respond in healthy way & create new habit

- ▶ Implementation Intention - have a replacement for the unhealthy habit: if....then
- ▶ Feeling sad?
 - ▶ I used to have Ben & Jerry's
 - ▶ Now I listen to music
- ▶ Mad at my spouse? boss? BFF?
 - ▶ I used to eat cookies
 - ▶ Now I go for a walk



Stress & You

- ▶ Stress hormone, cortisol - affects appetite-control chemicals and compromises the immune system
- ▶ Often turn to sweets/salty snacks
- ▶ Fuel with foods that build immune system:
 - ▶ Reduce high fat foods (low fat, vegetarian diet can lower cortisol levels)
 - ▶ Limit caffeine
 - ▶ More vitamin B & C foods
 - ▶ Whole real foods vs processed, sugary foods
- ▶ Exercise - lowers cortisol levels

Tips to reduce stress

- ▶ Keep things in perspective - don't sweat the small stuff, and it's all small stuff
- ▶ Deep breathing, meditation, prayer
- ▶ Move your body, go outside, enjoy nature
- ▶ Problem solve
 - ▶ List the chain of events leading up to the stress
 - ▶ How can you break the chain?
- ▶ Get support, call a friend, journal

Always 'hungry'?

- ▶ Is it real hunger?
- ▶ Be sure meals are well balanced
- ▶ Small meals/snacks every 2-3 hours may work for you
- ▶ Limit processed foods
- ▶ Keep healthy snacks on hand and visible (i.e. veggies, fruits)
- ▶ Track your foods and mood (MyFitnessPal online)
- ▶ Have a signal that your meal is over - 'close the kitchen'
- ▶ Get moving
- ▶ Drink plenty of water

What is the bottom line?

- ▶ Set up your world to reduce chance of mindless eating
- ▶ Practice mindfulness:
 - ▶ Listen to hunger & satiety
 - ▶ Have mindful bites
- ▶ Recognize emotional eating and respond in more healthy way
- ▶ Eat more whole, real foods
- ▶ Move more!

Where to start?

- ▶ Choose 1-2 habits to change at a time
- ▶ Do you have a **problem food cue** you could get rid of?
- ▶ Do you have a **positive cue** you could add?
- ▶ Implementation intention:
- ▶ If _____, then I will _____
- ▶ When? _____ Why? _____
- ▶ How will I make this happen? _____
- ▶ What will stand in my way? _____
- ▶ How will I get around that? _____

SMART Goal

- ▶ **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound**
- ▶ I will eat mindfully ≠ SMART goal
- ▶ If I want to snack after dinner, then I will only eat it at the kitchen table
- ▶ When? After dinner Why? Reduce mindless eating in other areas of the house
- ▶ How will I make this happen? Talk to the family so they know we are only eating at the table
- ▶ What will stand in my way? Watching TV & eating
- ▶ How will I get around that? 'close the kitchen' after dinner by brushing my teeth and flossing



Happy Summer!

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