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NEWS

Mindful eating a game changer in making better choices | Healthy 2020

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Mindfulness is a secret weapon when it comes to weight management and wellness. Most of us know what we should be eating. The real challenge is figuring out how to make better choices consistently and learning to enjoy healthy food. Mindful eating helps us do just that.

With all the farmer's markets, barbecues and summer celebrations coming up, here is some information to make this summer one of our best and most enjoyable.

Benefits of mindful eating

Reducesovereating and stress eating - Mindfulness helps us slow down, reduce stress and guides us to make healthier choices. When we direct our focus mindfully, we can connect to the higher-level thinking and plan part of our brain vs. acting out of the survival, autopilot and impulsive part of our brain which gives into hardwired cravings for fat and sugar.

Improves our relationship to food - Mindfulness helps us understand and experience our emotions in a healthier way. Being mindful when we are eating and when choosing our foods can reveal memories, emotions and beliefs about ourselves and food that may cause us to follow poor eating habits.

Enhances our enjoyment of food - Eating mindfully brings a new level of enjoyment and celebration of the tastes, smells, textures and colors of food. Practicing gratitude at meals helps us connect to the source of our nourishment increasing our connection to the earth, community, family and friends.

Below is some advice from "Basics of Mindful Eating" by Dr. Lynn Rossy of the University of Missouri, www.thecenterformindfuleating.org:

B - Breath and belly check: Pay attention to your breathing. Take 1-5 deep breaths to reduce stress and pause before eating. Check in with sensations in your belly to determine if you are truly hungry or just want a quick hit of pleasure in response to stress or boredom.

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A - Assess your food: Take a moment to really think about the food you are about to eat. Where did it come from? What is in it? Is it real, whole or processed? Do you really want to put it into your body?

S - Slow down: It takes 20 minutes for your brain to process if you are full or not. Slowing down can assure that you are not overeating and aids in digestion.

I - Investigate hunger throughoutmeal: Are you truly still hungry or are you on autopilot? Do you belong to the “Clean Plate Club” from years ago? Are you really going to save a starving child in Africa if you finish your plate? Your stomach is not a wastebasket.

C - Chew thoroughly: Chewing your food fully will help you get the most nutrients and vitamins found in the food and improves digestion.

S - Savor your food: Food is a friend, not an enemy. Learn a whole new level of enjoyment for healthy food. When it comes to junk food, you can still enjoy sometimes, but more sparingly. Instead of eating 12 Oreo cookies, perhaps just one or two mindfully can do the trick.

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