

# STRESS FREE *Meal Times*

## Why is this important?

High stress levels around mealtimes can interrupt the release of critical digestive enzymes and hormones which can slow down digestion and lead to bloating, abdominal pain, and excess gas. Below are some tips for lowering stress at meal times and promoting digestion.

## Start With a Plan

What's the most stressful part of any meal? Deciding what to eat!

Here are some simple steps for creating a weekly meal plan:

Decide which meals you need to cook for the week.

Find recipes for those meals and jot them down on your calendar.

Make a grocery list & shop or order groceries for pickup or delivery.

If you've got time, set aside an hour to prep produce for faster dinners.

Grab the Meal Planning That Fits Your Life + Recipe Guide Bundle to become a meal planning wizard.

## Create a Calm Eating Environment

Eating while distracted, whether it's while you're driving or watching tv, can prevent your body from focusing on the processes of eating, digesting, and metabolizing.

For at least one meal a day, try to eat in an environment where:

You have no distractions (phone, work, driving, etc.)

You're seated at a table instead of on the couch.

If you want to take it a step further, you can play some calming music or enhance the atmosphere by setting a place at the table and lighting a candle.

## Savor Your Meal

Digestion really starts before you take your first bite of food.

Doing the following when you eat can promote the process of digestion:

Take a moment to look at your plate and smell your food.

Inhale deeply through your nose and exhale through your mouth 3 to 5 times.

Chew your food slowly and thoroughly before swallowing.

## Reminder

During really stressful times, you may not have the capacity to do all of the above tips and tricks, and that's okay! Just do what you can in the moment.

Supporting your body sometimes means just doing what you can.