



## BASICS of Mindful Eating

Here are the BASICS of Mindful Eating. These are guidelines (not rules) to help you become conscious about how, what, when and why you eat. Follow them as best you can and as often as you can, knowing that there will be times when it will be next to impossible to eat this way. Let these BASICS guide you to a way of eating that pleases your taste buds and supports your body's health.

### **B – Breathe and Belly Check for hunger and satiety before you eat.**

Take a few deep breaths as you begin to check in with your belly. Are there sensations of physical hunger? How hungry are you? What are you hungry for? Is there a particular type of food you'd like to have? You might want food. You might be thirsty. You might be hungry for something entirely different than food. Listen to what your body is telling you.

### **A – Assess your Food**

What does it look like? Does it look appealing? Where does it come from? Is it a food you can recognize or is it a food-like substance (e.g. highly processed)? Briefly be aware of the sun, the rain and all of the other processes by which this food arrived in front of you today. Ask yourself if this is the food you really want. A brief pause to assess your food can give you lots of information about it.

### **S – Slow Down**

Slowing down while you are eating can help you enjoy your food more fully. Slowing down also helps you be aware of when you're getting full. Simple methods to help you slow down include putting down your fork or spoon between bites, pausing and taking a breath between bites, and chewing your food completely.

### **I – Investigate your hunger throughout the meal**

Be aware of your distractions and keep bringing your attention back to eating, tasting, and assessing your hunger and satiety throughout the meal. Stop half-way through your meal and check in with your belly. You may discover you're no longer hungry even though there's food on your plate or you may discover you don't even like the food you're eating. Give yourself permission to stop or to continue based on what you discover.

### **C – Chew Your Food Thoroughly**

Chewing your food thoroughly help you to slow down and your body to digest the nutrients from your food more efficiently. As a result, you will have time to really taste your food and be tuned into the signals that your hunger is dissipating. The sooner you are aware of satiety, the less likely it will be that you will over-eat.

### **S – Savor Your Food**

Savoring your food means taking time to choose food you really like and food that would satisfy you right now. Choose food that honors your taste buds and your body. Become fully present for the experience of eating and the pleasure that it can bring. Let all of your attention be on the range of sensations available in each bite and feel the joy. If you can't savor it, why eat it?



## Hunger and Satisfaction Scale

1. Starved! I don't care what or how much I eat!
2. Very hungry!
3. Hungry. I feel a physical sense of hunger.

**EAT!**

Ideal  
Range

4. Slightly hungry.
5. Comfortable. Not hungry or full.
6. **Satisfied with the meal.**
7. Starting to get a feeling of fullness.
8. A little too full, feeling uncomfortable.
9. Way too full!
10. Stuffed! I couldn't eat another bite- uugh!

Any combination of the following can be experienced as hunger sensations or symptoms--mild gurgling or gnawing in the stomach, growling noise, lightheadedness, uncomfortable stomach pain, irritability, feeling faint, and headache.

When you "*breath and belly check*" before you eat, ask yourself: "Am I hungry? What's my hunger level? What am I hungry for?"

When you "*investigate your hunger throughout your meal*," ask yourself: "Has my body had enough?" "Am I eating just because there's more food?" "Can I stop before I get full?"

The feelings of hunger and satiety may be hard to identify at first. Keep checking and you will learn more about your body and what it needs and wants.