



EAT MINDFULLY

Mindful eating helps with being more aware while you eat. It doesn't focus on what you eat, but rather how and why you eat. Eating mindfully involves paying attention to hunger cues, tastes, textures, colors, and avoiding distractions while you eat. Practicing mindful eating allows you to savor each bite while getting more enjoyment out of your food. It can also help you recognize when you are full. The tips below can help you continue your Scale Back Alabama journey, being mindful along the way.

Next time you pick up a snack follow these steps before you take a bite:

1. Ask yourself: Do I feel hungry?
2. Consider if you are stressed, emotional, or just bored.
3. Think back to your last meal – how long ago did you eat and did you eat enough at the meal?
4. Judge if the snack is healthy or an empty calorie junk food.

Begin and End a Meal Based on Hunger Cues

Oftentimes we eat so fast that our bodies don't realize when we are full. It takes about 20 minutes for our brains to "catch up" with our stomachs. This means that if we eat slower we will have a better chance of eating to satisfaction rather than to the point of being stuffed.

Identify triggers for mindless eating

Triggers could include stress, being overly tired or eating while working, driving, or watching television. Recognize the difference between a need to eat and the desire to eat. To avoid mindless eating, engage in other activities such as getting up from your desk and going for a walk around the office.

Use your senses

Notice the crunch of a bell pepper, the sweetness of an apple, or the bitterness of a grapefruit. Paying attention to the smell, taste, and texture of the food you eat will lead to greater satisfaction of food, and often you will find that you don't need to eat as much because you have taken the time to appreciate and really enjoy the food you have eaten.

INCLUSION MATTERS: Do you ever find yourself munching on a snack in front of your computer or watching TV and then next thing you know, you have eaten the entire bag? Is your "mind FULL" or are you being "mindful" and in the present? Practicing mindful eating is a great way to take charge of your health and maintain a healthy eating regimen. Check out this [article and video](#) to learn more. Instead of eating at your desk or in front of the TV this week, take time and eat in the cafeteria, outdoors or grab a co-worker or family member and enjoy your meal together at a table. Eating without distractions is the best way to get started with mindful eating!

Mindful Eating Tips:

- Slow down
- Create a healthy eating environment
- Think about where the food comes from
- Consider your feelings when you eat
- Eliminate distractions
- Use a food diary
- Measure your food
- Pay attention to hunger cues

FAMILY MATTERS: Children are very connected to their senses. They need to like the way something looks, feels, or smells before it goes into their mouth. As a parent you can play a role by using mindful eating techniques to help your child select healthier foods, determine when they are hungry or full, and enjoy the foods they eat.

LINKS:

heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyEating/Using-Mindfulness-to-Stop-Overeating-UCM_462515_Article.jsp

healthline.com/nutrition/mindful-eating-guide

Healthy Recipes: mindful.sodexo.com/mindful-meals-recipes