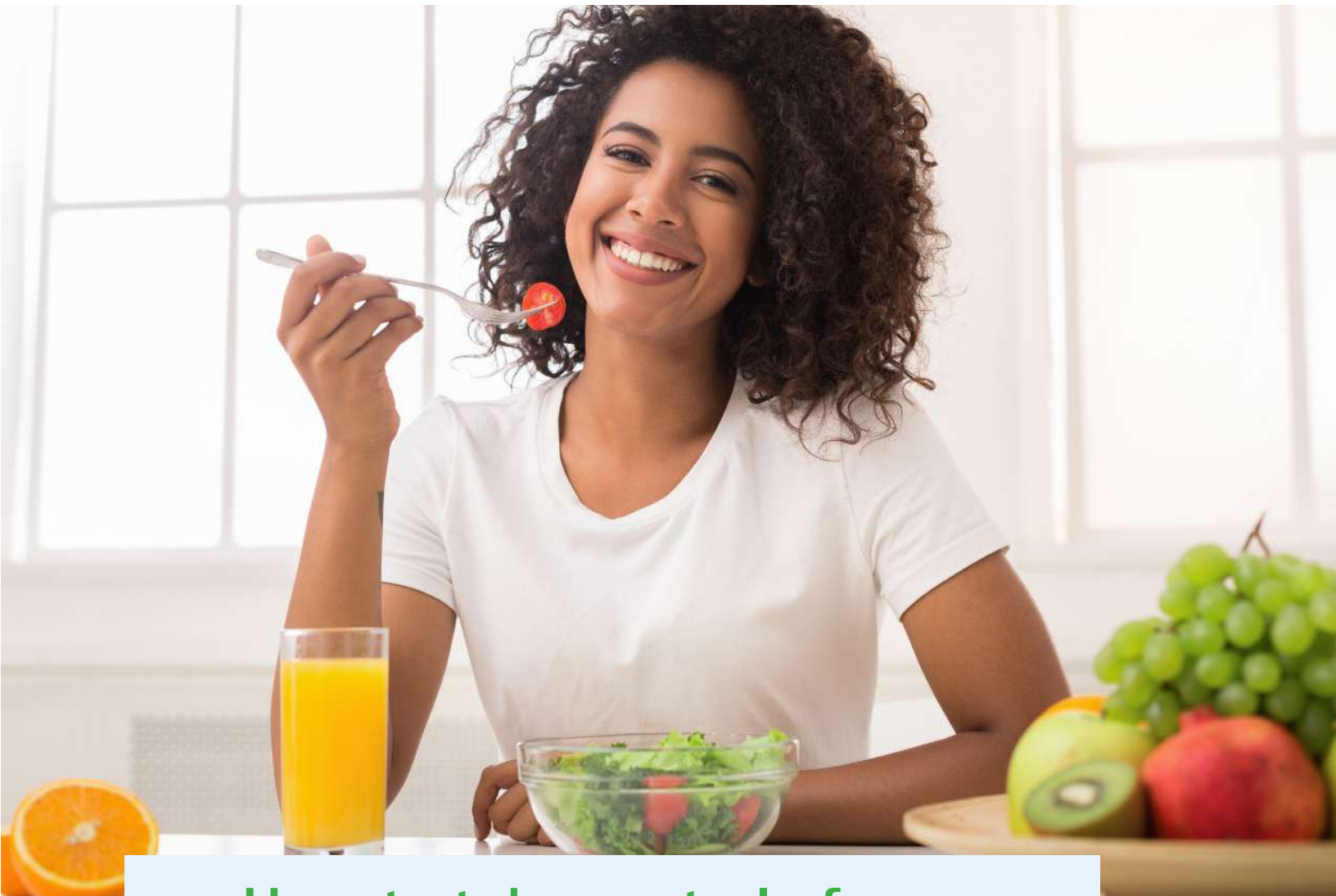


After reading this lesson, click the survey link at the end to answer a few questions and receive nutrition education credit for your class.



Mindful Eating



How to take control of your eating habits

THINK ABOUT IT.....

Always good advice, right? We give regular thought to our health and the health of our families. We think about our daily activities. We think about our jobs. We think about saving for a vacation, a different car, our kid's education. Right? So when was the last time we really thought about eating?

I'm not talking about eating a healthy, balanced diet as described in MyPlate. You already have heard a lot about that and hopefully are working toward improved eating. I'm talking about actually thinking about the process of eating "MINDFULLY."

Have you ever been bored, sad, happy, (list any emotion), grabbed a bag of chips, turned on the TV and before you knew it you're staring into an empty bag? This scene would be the opposite of MINDFUL eating. It is called DISTRACTED eating. We didn't think much about what we were doing, the calories we consumed, if we were hungry or not, in fact we weren't thinking at all. Plus you probably felt physically uncomfortable or sick from over-eating and a little guilty about your loss of control. Not a positive experience!

MINDFUL eating is the practice of always being aware of the food we are choosing to eat and being aware of the emotions we are feeling at the time.

What are the advantages of MINDFUL eating?

- *More enjoyment of the food we are eating.*
- *Easier digestion.*
- *Reduced calories.*
- *Reduced stress.*
- *Better nutrition.*
- *Helps you identify your own feelings of hunger and fullness.*
- *Helps develop a better eating pattern.*





What are some suggestions for becoming a MINDFUL eater?

- *First ask yourself, am I truly hungry? Do I truly need to eat? Am I feeling some emotion like boredom, frustration, or loneliness and not hunger?*
- *How long has it been since my last meal or snack? If it has been less than 4 hours since my last meal I may not be hungry.*
- *While chewing think about the texture, temperature, taste, and smell of the food.*
- *Think about where the food was grown and how it nourishes the body.*
- *Show gratitude for the food and who prepared it.*

If weight loss is something you need to work toward, eating MINDFULLY can be very important. Being a DISTRACTED eater often becomes a habit. It takes time to change habits. Try making some of these changes to reach and maintain a healthy weight.

- *Make sure your meals contain 3 foods: Fiber, Fat, and Protein. These three ingredients take the longest to break down causing a slower release of energy and keeping you fuller for longer.*
- *Eat only during designated meals and snacks. Sit down at the table to eat.*
- *Choose only the serving size you need before starting to eat—don't just grab the whole bag.*
- *Slow down—take small bites, chew thoroughly.*
- *Put your fork down from time to time.*
- *Take small sips of water during your meal.*
- *Talk with others at mealtimes, building family bonds.*
- *Turn off the TV, laptop, and phone—all distractions—during mealtimes.*
- *Consider keeping a food and mood diary with eating times and feelings experienced.*
- *Move at least 30 minutes per day, five days per week.*
- *Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Sometimes we are thirsty and not really hungry.*

STOP!

[Click here to complete the survey and receive credit](#)



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