Master Mindful Eating

ArchWell ™
HEALTH

Do you find yourself eating when you're not hungry? Maybe you eat due to boredom, feeling stressed, sad, or simply because you enjoy it. Mindless eating, or distracted eating, is associated with anxiety, overeating, and weight gain. Mindful eating is about bringing your attention and awareness to every meal. Ready to transform the way you eat? Use the tips below to start your journey towards healthier, more intentional eating habits.

What is mindful eating?

Mindful eating helps you make food choices that are nourishing and satisfying. Knowing why you eat is just as important as when and how much. By eating mindfully, you use your senses to fully enjoy your meals.

Track your appetite with a hunger scale.

Use the hunger tracker below to help you decide the best time to eat. Try to start eating when you're just a little hungry and stop when you're satisfied. If you wait until you're famished or beyond hungry, you may eat too much and make unhealthy choices. Eating until you are uncomfortable, stuffed or beyond full can make you feel tired and might lead to weight gain.

Key Decision Point

1	Beyond Hungry	I have no energy. I feel faint, irritable and eat whatever food is available.
2	Famished	My energy level is decreasing, and I am focused on hunger.
3	Hungry	I have a strong urge to eat.
4	**Slightly Hungry**	I am beginning to think about food and feel a light urge to eat.
5	**Neutral**	I have enough energy to perform tasks and feel neither hungry nor full.
6	**Satisfied**	I am aware of the food in my stomach and feel entirely satisfied.
7	Full	I am full to the point that taking any more bites will cause discomfort.
8	Uncomfortable	I feel uncomfortable. Eating more food will worsen my discomfort.
9	Stuffed	I feel heavy, tired and bloated.
10	Beyond Full	I have discomfort and pain that affects my ability to be physically active.

Mindful Eating Zone (rows 4–6)

Key Decision Point

Tips to avoid extreme hunger and overeating.

Think about why you are eating. Are you eating because you are hungry? Or are you eating to soothe your emotions or to experience taste?

Chew slowly and focus on the food you are eating Avoid eating while watching TV, reading, or surfing the internet as this may cause you to eat more food than your body needs.

Practice portion control. Instead of eating out of the box or bag, place a reasonable portion in a bowl. Realize that the second portion will not taste any better than the first one.

Eat breakfast every day. Start your day off right by eating breakfast filled with protein to kick start a healthy eating pattern, keep you full and energized and avoid extreme hunger by mid-morning.

Choose healthy snacks. If your meals are more than four hours apart, snacks can help you avoid extreme hunger, keep you full in between meals and help manage your hunger come mealtime.

Wait 20 minutes before eating a second helping or dessert. This gives your stomach time to tell your brain it is full.

Healthy distractions from mindless eating.

- Tackle some chores around your home like laundry, dishes, or sweeping.
- Go for a walk, to the gym, or an ArchWell Health exercise class.
- Get out of the house. Consider going to the park or the mall.
- Organize something, such as your closet or a box of photos.
- Do a puzzle, crossword puzzle, or other mind game.
- Watch a favorite movie or TV show.
- Start a garden or pot some plants.
- Call a friend or family member.
- Drink a glass of water or tea.
- Listen to music or a podcast.
- Use an adult coloring book.
- Read a book or magazine.
- Chew gum.

Get Support

Your ArchWell Health provider can assist with your eating habits. If you are struggling to make a change, consider asking for your health care provider's advice and direction.