

# Food for Thought

## What is mindful eating?

- Allowing yourself to become aware of the positive and nurturing opportunities that are available through food preparation and consumption by respecting your own inner wisdom.
- Choosing to eat food that is both pleasing to you and nourishing to your body by using all your senses to explore, savor, and taste.
- Learning to be aware of physical hunger and satiety cues to guide your decision to begin eating and to stop eating.
- Acknowledging responses to food (likes, neutral or dislikes) without judgment.

## Free Handout for Individuals from The Center for Mindful Eating

### Satiety and Fullness

By Megrette Fletcher M.Ed., RD, CDE

Have you ever noticed how some meals are very rewarding and you can eat a relatively small amount of food while other meals may leave you full but still hungry for more? Satiety is the level of satisfaction a person has after eating. This is different than fullness which is referring to the physical weight or volume of food in the stomach.

To explain this concept more, imagine eating lettuce. Most people can eat a lot of lettuce. After eating the lettuce, they may feel full but not satisfied. Eating in the presence of fullness is a common experience for many people. This often happens because the physical sensation of fullness arose before the emotional experience satiety or meal satisfaction.

In every meal these two forces are present. They are engaged in a race to see who gets to the end of the meal first. When a person can recognize the emotional experience of satiety before the physical experience of fullness, the meal is often thought of as pleasant, enjoyable and satisfying. In these moments, the desire to eat

stops. People will note that food was still on their plate, there were chips in the bag, or ice cream in the dish.

When the emotional experience of satiety is reached after fullness has arrived, the meal can often cause physical discomfort or trigger food guilt.



### How mindful eating can help

The first way mindful eating can help is to understand that the purpose of eating has shifted and the goal is to no longer to feel full but satisfied. The intent of eating is to eat a meal that has a level satiety that is pleasing to you.

Choosing to eat foods that are both pleasing to you and nourishing to your body by using all your senses to explore, savor and taste is a principle of mindful eating. To do this try the following suggestions.

Select three different foods from three different food groups. If you are not sure which foods are in which food group, visit [MyPlate.Gov](http://MyPlate.Gov). The nutrient competition and calorie

density of foods contribute greatly to the experience of satiety. Eating low calorie foods often can promote fullness but not satiety. The experience of never feeling satisfied after eating can lead to habitual overeating.

Continue to use your senses when selecting a meal. Choose a meal that has three distinct colors. This step uses the sensory experience of your eyes.

Next choose three distinct textures: soft, creamy, chewy, crunchy, dry, cold, wet. This step uses the sensory experience of mouth feel and chewing which is also associated with satiety.

Hop around the meal, tasting one bite fully and another food. Resist the urge to eat a single food till it is gone. This step resets the pallet, enhancing how food flavors taste.

Pause frequently while eating and check in with your body and observe what you are feeling. Notice if hunger, fullness, or satiety is present. Have fun as you experiment with eating this way.

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