



EATING, HEALTH, AND WEIGHT

Use this guide to help you get back in touch with your natural cues!



How can you tell when you're **hungry**? Does hunger often come on **suddenly** and **unexpectedly**, hitting you like a semi truck? What about when you're **full**? Do you often find yourself in **discomfort** or even pain, finding it hard to know when to stop eating? How do you know that you are **finished with a meal** or snack?

Often, we lose touch with our innate, **natural hunger and fullness cues** because of learned eating patterns. This leads to an **inability to identify** hunger or fullness. Sometimes it can come from messages we learned growing up (think about the "Clean Plate Club!"). Other times it can come from being **distracted** or **preoccupied while eating**.

Instead of using weight or body size as our guide for hunger or fullness, we want to **focus our attention on listening** to the cues our body sends to us. Scientists know now that **weight and body size are NOT indicators of health** or wellbeing, and **weight loss is often unhealthy and damaging** to the body.

We can re-learn our hunger and fullness cues by using a **mindfulness** approach.
Read on to learn how **our bodies tell us how much to eat.**



WHAT AM I FEELING RIGHT NOW?

HUNGER AND FULLNESS CUES

Check in with yourself **several times each day**. When you start to feel hunger, give it a number! Then **honor your hunger cues** and give yourself **permission** to eat.

After eating for a few minutes, **check in** with your fullness cues. Is your body **asking** for you to eat **more**? Or have you given your body **exactly** what it needs? Maybe you are starting to feel some physical **discomfort**. Listen to the signals your body sends you.

Offer yourself **compassion** and **kindness** by giving yourself permission to **respect your fullness cues**. Not every time will be perfect, and it can take a bit of **practice** to get the hang of using the hunger and fullness scale. **Don't give up!**

Remember that part of **normal eating** can be undereating and overeating as well as eating just the right amount! You will learn how to **pay attention** to your body.

Treat your body with respect by listening. Eating is an **enjoyable** activity – not a competition!

HERE OFTEN?
CONTACT
WELLNESS
COORDINATOR

1
2

Practically **starving**. Completely empty, dizzy, struggling to concentrate, possibly feeling sick. You'll eat *anything!*

"**Hangry**," irritable, or even nauseous from hunger.

3

Strong desire to eat with strong hunger cues. Usually you will feel your **stomach growling**.

4

Peckish. Comfortable hunger. **Time to think about what to eat!**

AIM TO
HONOR YOUR
HUNGER
AROUND HERE

5

Neutral. Neither hungry nor full.

6

Satisfied, but **could eat more** without causing discomfort.

AIM TO
RESPECT YOUR
FULLNESS
AROUND HERE

7

Feeling totally satisfied. Lasting fullness. Hunger will be gone for a few hours.

8

Total fullness. **Some discomfort**. You might unbutton your pants or loosen your belt.

9

Stuffed and **uncomfortable**. You may feel tightness or bloating in your abdomen.

HERE OFTEN?
CONTACT
WELLNESS
COORDINATOR

10

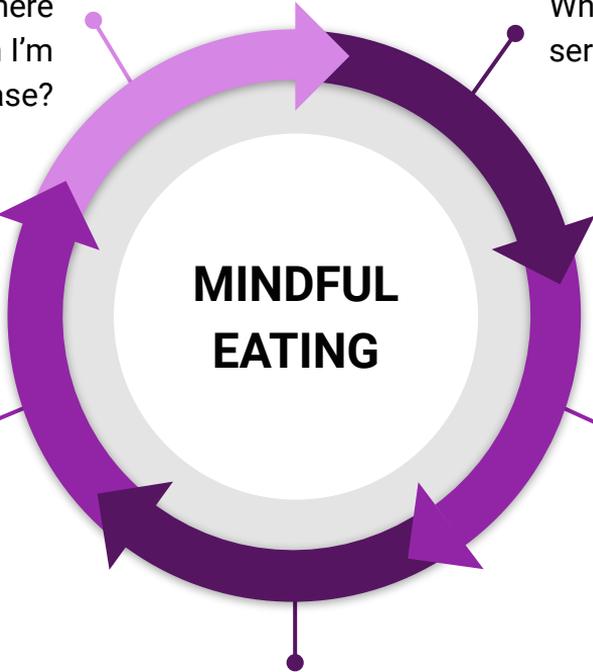
Painfully full. Fullness is to the point of nausea and pain.

WHERE?

Where does my food come from? Where am I eating? Where is my mind when I'm eating? Am I distracted, focused, at ease?

WHY?

Why do I eat? What purpose does eating serve for me? What am I feeling right now?



**MINDFUL
EATING**

HOW MUCH?

How much do I eat? How much time or energy will I invest in finding, choosing, and making my food?

WHEN?

When do I want to eat? When am I most hungry? When do I decide I'm done eating? When did I last eat?

WHAT?

What do I want to eat? What am I hungry for? What is my hunger or fullness number on the 1-10 scale?



WHAT IS “NORMAL” EATING?

Arrive at the table **HUNGRY!** Remove restrictive rules by **LISTENING** to your hunger.

Select foods you truly enjoy. Eat what you want – whether that’s **A LITTLE OR A LOT.**

Choose a nutritious, balanced variety of foods. **TRY NEW FOODS** often!



GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION to eat regardless of whether you are happy, sad, or bored.

Normal eating is usually 3 – **SOMETIMES 4 OR EVEN 5** – meals each day... Or just grazing!

Sometimes, you might overeat. Other times, you might undereat. **BOTH ARE NORMAL.**



PLACE TRUST IN YOUR BODY and believe in its ability to adapt to your eating.

Eating is one of many important areas of your life, but it isn’t the **MOST (NOR LEAST)** important.

Be flexible and eat based on **YOUR OWN** hunger, schedule, food, feelings – not anyone else’s!



NORMAL EATING IS FLEXIBLE & FREE!



... MOVE, HIDE, OR THROW AWAY YOUR SCALE ...

Out of sight, out of mind – removing the temptation to step on the scale is a great first step to ditching your weight-measuring habits.

... CHANGE YOUR MEASUREMENT ...

There are many better ways to measure your health other than your weight. For example, you could consider how you physically feel in your body, how many hours of sleep you're getting, your athletic performance, any changes in your mood, your energy levels, or even how often you're reaching your non-weight-related goals.

... BE CURIOUS ...

Let your curiosity about yourself wander: how does weighing yourself affect you? How does it serve you? What else can serve those needs?

... CREATE WELLBEING THROUGH SELF-CARE AND SELF-LOVE ...

Offering yourself kindness, self-compassion, patience, and love are valuable paths to achieving wellness. Accomplish food freedom by honoring your hunger, respecting your fullness, listening to your food cravings, and participating in joyful movements on a regular basis.

... PAY ATTENTION ...

Try to identify what is happening around or to you before you step on the scale. Are you dealing with a stressful day? What happens after stepping on the scale? How does it make you feel? When you don't weigh yourself, what else do you notice around you? Pay attention to the messages you may be absorbing or sending yourself before and after your measurements.