

# 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

#### Right Eating

*Brian M. Shelley M.D.*

Although a new year is an obvious opportunity for a new approach to health, the concept of “weight loss” may be a set-up for failure. Immediately, the idea of a “loss” is front and center. This implies a loss of favorite foods and ingrained habits, and a subtle sense of deprivation can set in even before getting started.

A better term might be “right eating,” which does not require a loss of any kind, but instead a gain. By adopting a more mindful approach to eating, we can make more of what is in front of us, and more fully enjoy the food that we do choose to eat. This concept

may sound trite, but participants in our Mindful Eating and Living course in Albuquerque, N.M., have reported that mindful eating generally leads to more

satisfaction from less food, with more good feelings after the meal too!

After about four weeks of practicing mindfulness meditation for at least 10 minutes a day and

trying to eat more mindfully in general, one female participant said:

*I also noticed ... that after dinner if I feel like I need to eat something sweet, I'll have a half an orange. It seems that when I have the sweet from the orange, that's enough. I don't feel like I have to go search*

*something else out to eat like a cookie or a pastry or something. I kind of feel like, "Oh, that's enough." I can go actually without having anything else.*

This woman has created options for herself via right eating. She lost weight, but not by concentrating on loss and deprivation. Mindful eating provides a means for enhancing satisfaction and pleasure in and around eating, which is our “gain.”

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