

Parent Activity

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFUL EATING



WHAT IS MINDFUL EATING?

- A form of mind-body medicine skill to help you understand and appreciate how you relate to food
- Can help you slow down when eating and think about the food in front of you as well as how you feel in your body, mind and emotions before, during and after you eat
- In our busy world it is easy to forget where food comes from, how it is made, and how it affects us. This activity gives you a chance to appreciate your meals and use mealtime as an opportunity to slow down and pay attention
- Uses imagery to help you visualize the food nourishing your body and giving you energy and strength
- Encourages us to make healthier choices about what and how we eat, whenever possible

WHY TRY MINDFUL EATING?

- Eating meals can be turned into a relaxing and more meaningful experience
- Regain an appreciation for where food comes from and how it is made
- Remember how growing, obtaining and cooking food is an important part of our culture and ancestry
- Stay in tune with your own hunger and thirst cues and recognize when you are eating out of boredom or just for social reasons
- Increases your ability to taste, smell and enjoy your food as this activity will help you stay present during mealtimes



Parent Activity

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WEEK 6 ACTIVITIES

Materials needed:

1. Small piece of snack, chocolate, fruit, or vegetable
2. Journal and a pen to write down how you felt about this activity



Mindful eating instructions:

- a. Before you start this activity, answer the following questions in your journal:
 1. How do you feel about food in general? Is it something you only eat when hungry? When you're bored? When you're with friends?
 2. How do you normally eat your meals? With friends? With family? Alone? At a table? Watching TV? While driving?

- b. For the first mindful eating activity, put a small amount of food on your plate, either a piece of candy, fruit, veggie, or a snack
- c. Place the food on the table in front of you and take a seat with your feet planted on the floor
- d. Feel free to do a few soft belly breaths to enter a relaxed state
- e. First you will look at the food in front of you and take note of what you see, what you smell, what texture(s) you sense, how you feel
- f. Attached is a guided script that is similar to your prior meditative scripts, however this one is made up of guided questions to help you experience your food in a unique and more present way
- g. If you feel comfortable, share your answers and your feelings about this activity with your family
- h. Write down your thoughts and feelings about this activity in your journal

MIND-BODY SKILLS GROUP



Eating Meditation

Purpose

- Tool for developing awareness
- Promotes harmony between the food we eat and our body's actual needs
- Identifies emotional issues related to food

Normally, most of us eat automatically or mechanically.

Now, we are going to experiment with eating differently, paying full attention in a non-judgmental, open way, and staying in the present moment as much as possible.

Take one piece of food of your choice, and see if you can entertain the notion that you are seeing and sensing this object for the very first time.

What does it look like?

What shape is it?

What colors?

How does it reflect light?

Next, maybe investigate more closely how it feels. What is its temperature? What is its surface texture? What is its density?

Perhaps you might also bring it up to your nose. Do you smell anything? Are you salivating?

How do you feel about putting this food into your body right now?

How does your body feel anticipating eating in this moment?

Now we are going to receive this food into our body. Be aware of your arm moving to your mouth. How is the food taken into the mouth? Experience the food in your mouth. Chew slowly and focus your full attention on the food's taste and texture. Be aware of any desire you have to rush through this piece of food so that you can have another. Be aware of the intention to swallow before you actually swallow. Notice how far into your body you can still feel the food. (What a difference hot chili peppers would make!)

Know that your body is now exactly one morsel of food heavier....

Kid Activity

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFUL EATING



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- In our busy world it is easy to forget where food comes from, how it is made, and how it affects us. This activity gives you a chance to appreciate your meals and use mealtime as an opportunity to slow down and pay attention
- Uses imagery to help you visualize the food nourishing your body and giving you energy and strength
- Encourages us to make healthier choices about what and how we eat, whenever possible

WHY TRY MINDFUL EATING?

- Eating meals can be turned into a relaxing and more meaningful experience
- Regain an appreciation for where food comes from and how it is made
- Remember how growing, obtaining and cooking food is an important part of our culture and ancestry
- Stay in tune with your own hunger and thirst cues and recognize when you are eating out of boredom or just for social reasons
- Increases your ability to taste, smell and enjoy your food as this activity will help you stay present during mealtimes



Kid Activity

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WEEK 6 ACTIVITIES

Materials needed:

1. Small piece of snack, chocolate, fruit, or vegetable
2. The questions sheet and a pen/pencil to write down your answers



Mindful eating instructions:

- a. Before you start this activity, you will be asked to answer a couple questions about why and how you eat
- b. For the first mindful eating activity, put a small amount of food on your plate, either a piece of candy, fruit, veggie, or a snack
- c. Place the food on the table in front of you and take a seat with your feet planted on the floor

- d. Feel free to do a few soft belly breaths to enter a relaxed state
- e. First you will look at the food in front of you and take note of what you see, what you smell, what texture you sense, how you feel
- f. Attached is a list of questions to help you understand how you feel about food and how your body uses food as fuel, just like putting gas in a car
- g. If you feel comfortable, share your answers and your feelings about this activity with your family
- h. Additional worksheets have been provided for each child, or for children to repeat for different foods.

Mindful eating is learned behavior; practice thinking about the foods you eat

Kid Activity

QUESTIONS FOR WHILE YOU EAT YOUR SNACK

Before you begin this activity, please answer the following questions as best as you can:

1. *How do you feel about food in general? What about particular types of food? Is it something you only eat when hungry? When you're bored? When you're with friends?*

2. *How do you normally eat your meals? With friends? With family? Alone? At a table? Watching TV? How long do you spend eating a meal?*

Now have your piece of food on the plate in front of you:

1. What is the food item that is in front of you?
2. What ingredients make up this food? Where was it made? Did it come from the earth or a farm? Is it cooked or raw? If cooked, how was it cooked? If processed in a factory, how was it processed? Take some time to think about and answer the best you can.
3. What do you like about this food?
4. What do you not like about this food?

5. Describe the food in front of you using your sight, smell and sense of touch

6. Now focus on how YOU feel...do you feel hungry? If so, how do you know it is hunger that you're feeling? What sensation(s) in your body do you associate with hunger?

7. Do a few soft belly breaths.

8. Now take a small bite out of your food (just one bite for now!) and describe how it tastes and feels

9. Do a few more soft belly breaths.

10. How do you feel now? Has your hunger changed? Do you feel any cravings to eat more? What body sensations do you notice now?

11. Finish eating your snack and continue to focus on what it tastes like and how you feel while eating it

12. Challenge time!!!
 - a. How did you feel eating this snack versus when you normally eat a snack?

b. Do you normally feel hungry when you eat?

c. Do you take time to eat and notice how your hunger changes?

d. Did this snack taste different than when you've eaten it in the past?