



# MINDFUL EATING

## What is mindful eating?

Mindful eating is a meditative way of preparing and eating food. The process involves awareness through your senses and staying in the present moment through-out your meals. This awareness brings full attention to your experiences, cravings and physical cues when consuming food.

## Why is mindful eating important?

It can take up to 20 minutes for the brain to recognise that the stomach is full. In our society we are often eating on the go, distracted whilst eating and have an abundance of food choices. These factors lead to a lack of awareness around our meals and satiety cues.

When we are unaware of how and why we are eating this can lead to disordered eating patterns and behaviours. Studies have shown that eating mindfully can produce long term weight-loss results and stress reduction. The severity and frequency of binge eating has also been reduced with the implementation of mindful eating practices.

## How do I eat mindfully?

There are many ways in which you can increase your awareness around food. Start simply with a few meals and build from there. Here are some simple exercises you can implement:

- Eat slowly, allow enough time so meals are not rushed
- Chew your food thoroughly
- Reduce distractions where possible. Turn off the television and put your phone away
- Eat in silence
- Focus your attention on how the food makes you feel. Notice the texture, how it changes the more you chew. Explore the flavours and sensations the food creates
- Stop eating when you feel full

## Scenario

The table has been set - plate, cutlery, candles. While cooking dinner you notice the smells, colours and way the meal changes. You are aware of the reasons you chose that meal. You complete cooking the meal and take it to the table, take a moment here to stop and breathe. Eating the meal you chew slowly and thoroughly noticing the different sensations with each bite. You put down your eating utensils between each bite and are aware how the food makes you feel. You stop when you are starting to feel full and take another moment to breathe and appreciate the meal you have enjoyed.