Being Mindful about Mindless Eating

Brought to you by the UConn Dietetic Internship Program
Hello!

Dietetic Interns

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Overview

Why do we eat?

What is Mindless Eating?

How Do We Eat Mindfully?

Questions
Why do we eat?
Food is cultural, emotional, nutritious
What is Mindless Eating?

Are our eyes bigger than our stomach? Distractions? Convenience? Temptation?
Brian Wansink, Ph.D. **Food Dude**

Professor at Cornell University

Award winning academic research on changing eating behaviors.

Lead author of over 100 articles and books on mindless eating and eating behavior.
“The best diet is the one you don't know you're on.”

- Brian Wansink
Stale Popcorn Experiment

Hypothesis:
◉ Cues around moviegoers would influence how much popcorn they ate

Methods:
◉ Invited people to a Saturday matinee at a neighborhood cinema near Chicago
◉ Everyone given a soft drink and either a medium- or large-size bucket of popcorn*

*Popped 5 days previously and held under sterile conditions
Stale Popcorn Experiment

- Surveyed subjects on the way out and took (weighed) any leftover popcorn

Results
- People given the **big** buckets ate (average) 53% more than those given medium-sized buckets.
Our distractions
What are you most distracted by when you are eating?
Convenience
Do you find it difficult to resist foods within an arm’s reach?
I don't know how you can resist these chocolates.

There's six feet between me and temptation.
How to be Mindful

Recognize distractions
Change your environment
Understand the serving size
Mindful Eating

www.eatingmindfully.com

Aware
Tasting vs. mindless munching

Savor
Notice the texture, aroma, and flavor.
(Is it crunchy, sweet, salty smooth, spicy?)

Observe
Notice your body.
(rumbling stomach, low energy, stressed out, satisfied, full, empty)

In-the-Moment
Be fully present. Turn off the T.V. Sit down. When you eat, just eat.

Nonjudgment
Speak mindfully and compassionately.
Notice when "shoulds," rigid rules or guilt pop into your mind.

Susan Albers PsyD 2012 @ Eat, Drink & Be Mindful
Recognizing distractions

Things to notice

- Who are you with?
- What are you doing?
- When are you eating?
- Where are you when you eat?
- Why are you eating?
- How much are you eating?
Why eat mindfully?

- Smaller Portions
- Hunger Cues: Eat more slowly
- Body Appreciation: Listen to your body
- Fuel your body
Where does change start?

1. **Awareness**: be honest with yourself that you engage in mindless eating
   a. Eating from a bag of potato chips on the couch
   b. Eating from the ice cream container
   c. Eating while driving/on your phone/watching tv

2. **Knowledge**
   a. Learn to read labels - be aware of the recommended serving size. If you are still hungry after one portion, try sticking to veggies and fruits
Where does change start?

- Start at home
- Location change
- Plate size
- Size of serving utensils
- Convenience of food
Which plate has more food?
Is the first food you see the first food you eat?

The first food you see is about 3 times more likely to be the one you eat!

MOVE THE SNACKS OUT OF SIGHT!

Change your personal environment
Eat with a purpose
Summary:

How can we be mindful?

- Eat *mindfully* – remember the 5 W’s
- Listen to *hunger/fullness cues*
- Be aware of *nutrition labels*
- *Minimize convenience* of some foods
- Change your personal *environment*
- Eat with a *purpose* – sit down, take your time, chew your food
- *Enjoy* eating & *savor* the flavors!
Thanks!

Any questions?

References/Recommendations
- Brian Wansink