Part 2: It’s not just WHAT you eat, but HOW...Mindful Eating

Every day we get bombarded with what to eat in order to lose weight, but little attention is given to the way we eat. Mindful eating is not considered a diet, but a way of eating that increases awareness at mealtimes. It focuses on why you’re eating something and does your body need it? Here are two practices to help you tune in to your body to help reduce overeating.

Practice One: Slow Down. This will be a challenge for many because most of us are used to eating quickly to return to other activities. It’s helpful to first take note of your current eating practices and tweak from there. Notice the size of your bites and mouthfuls of food. Notice how many times food is chewed before swallowed. Do you take more bites of food even though you haven’t swallowed your previous mouthful? Do you pre-cut several pieces at a time? From this point, try taking smaller bites, chew 15 to 30 times before swallowing, put your utensils down between bites and look at your food before bringing it to your mouth. These practices will bring awareness to meals & snacks.

Practice Two: Become An Observer. This means listening to what your body and mind are trying to tell you and avoid judging yourself. Are your reasons for eating something to do with convenience, boredom, sadness, deliciousness or fatigue? When we eat for reasons other than hunger, it can lead to overeating. A check-in can help reduce these occurrences. You'll also need to identify a solution. For example, if you can identify that you're eating a bagel served at the meeting because it's there and you're bored, but not hungry since you ate breakfast an hour ago, the goal is to say “I’m eating this bagel because it’s here and I’m bored, not because I’m truly hungry. I’ll drink water and take a to-do list instead.”

Go To It: Pick one of these techniques and try it out at one meal this week. If you feel uncomfortable or frustrated, it’s normal and it gets easier with practice. Remember to label the eating with a feeling or reason not a judgment like questions of will power.

Feel It to Believe It

Have you ever wondered why your patients or even you can’t seem to fit in exercise despite all the known benefits? Newer research suggests that we need to adjust our messages to elicit how the individual will feel immediately: either during or after the workout. Most of us respond positively to instant gratification, so brainstorm the emotional and motivational benefits instead of listing the long-term health benefits. Although the long-term goals might get a person started, it’s the “feeling” type of benefits that more likely will lead to getting exercise on a regular basis.

Execute it: Here are examples of a few immediate benefits, but feel free to add to the list! Next time you’re about to forgo a workout, use one as a motivator!

Delicious Autumn Produce

Roast it: Pre-heat oven to 375°F. In a gallon-sized freezer bag, shake 3 chopped sweet potatoes and 2-lb Brussels sprouts with 1-tbsp olive oil and season liberally with garlic powder & black pepper. Add cayenne pepper if looking for an extra kick. This evenly distributes the oil for great flavor without the extra calories! Roast for 60 minutes.

Don’t waste it: Pre-heat oven to 375°F. Wash beets and save greens for sautéing in oil and garlic for tomorrow’s dinner. Place the beets on foil and drizzle with extra virgin olive oil. Bring up the sides of the foil to look like a tent and fold over the edges. Put on a baking sheet and roast for 25-60 min depending on the size. Skins will easily peel off. Quarter beets and throw in an arugula salad with feta and walnuts. Pour beet-infused oil and balsamic vinegar on top.

Microwave and Mix it: In a glass bowl, microwave, on high, 1 chopped apple with ½ tsp cinnamon and 2 tbsp water for 2 minutes. Let cool and enjoy by itself or add to 0% plain Greek yogurt.

Looking For A Jumpstart?

We offer OPTIFAST meal replacement shakes as part of a full liquid diet or partial shake and meal plan. Meal replacements are helpful because they are calorie controlled, convenient and narrow food choices to reduce food triggers and hunger while giving you the nutrients your body needs. Call to make an appointment.

Call us for more information about our weight control group sessions or to schedule an individual appointment with one of our endocrinologists or dietitian.
Columbia University Weight Control Center   212.305.5568  161 Fort Washington Avenue  5th floor Room 512