Transcript

Eating while engaged in other activity can prevent us from knowing what and how much we're putting in our mouths. When our focus is on the television or our phones while we eat we often eat more than we should. And that means too many calories, salt and fat. We need to be mindful, or attentive, to not only what we eat but how much we eat and also why we eat.

One way we can pay more attention to our food is to not eat while doing any other activity, like watching TV or reading. Put down your smart phone, turn off the computer. Snack away from the television and the book you're reading.

> *"If you're having a meal, it's not a good thing to sit and eat the meal while the TV's going on, because you are just mindlessly eating. It's much better if you can eat your meal, for instance, like a yogurt for lunch, or something like that, and then go ahead and watch television."*

If your snack food comes in a big bag, dish out only the amount that you intend to eat.

Eating mindfully also means eating to relieve hunger, not eating because we're bored, mad, sad, stressed out or even happy.

If you find yourself eating when you're not hungry, choose another activity to occupy your time. Keep your hands busy. Do something you enjoy that's healthy, productive or fun.

If you want to eat because of stress, take a quick walk. Replacing eating with some physical activity can help get rid of the craving because you weren't really hungry in the first place, you were stressed.

It's a good habit to take some time to figure out if you are really hungry, or if some other emotion is behind your craving.

If you're snacking because you are hungry, get rid of temptations by cleaning out your environment and choose healthy snacks like carrots or other vegetables. Other suggestions may be whole wheat crackers, rice cakes, or fruit. Higher fiber foods help fill you up faster. You could keep a bowl of fruit out on the counter in easy reach.

How do you eat during mealtime? When you sit down to a meal, do you eat quickly? Slow down. Chew your food. Enjoy your meal. Be mindful of each bite and give your food full attention. Eating slowly gives our bodies time to feel satisfied helping us to realize when we are actually full.

> *"It's very important for me to enjoy the food that I'm eating, but also to take my time to eat nice and slowly so that I can really read the signals in my brain that says, 'Okay, you're full.'"*

When your hunger is satisfied and you have eaten enough food, stop eating. Eating quickly doesn't give your body time to recognize that you've eaten as much as you have. That can lead to overeating and feeling satisfied only after we've eaten too much.

Reduce the amount of food you eat by taking less, sharing a dish, or saving some for leftovers.

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Using a smaller plate can help you eat less while still feeling like you are having larger portions.

Focus on your food. Think about what, how much, and why you are eating. You'll find yourself feeling more satisfied with less calories.

You can get more tips about mindful eating by talking to a registered dietitian, your healthcare provider or a nutritionist.

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