



IN THIS ISSUE

- Mindful Eating
- Recipe of the Month
- Product of the Month

What's Happening this Month:

- * Make sure to download the Baritastic app and join using our Capital Health code (76777). Use the app to log your food and get recommendations from your dietitian, be reminded of program events and updates, and access recipes!
- * Our August Support Group for post-weight loss surgery patients is Tuesday, August 24 from 6 – 7 p.m. This support group will be held virtually, so please check our online support group for the link to access, or message the dietitian at tbalestrieri@capitalhealth.org to receive the link.
- * If you had surgery and are not a member of our Post-Op Online Support Group, the Capital Health D.R.E.A.M. Team, please e-mail Theresa at tbalestrieri@capitalhealth.org so she can e-mail you the link and accept your request. This is a great way to obtain support from our program and other post-op patients in our program right at your fingertips, 24/7!
- * Is someone in your life thinking about weight loss surgery? Bring them to Dr. Chung's information session on Wednesday, August 25 from 6 – 7 p.m. To register, call our office to speak to Amy at 609.537.6777.
- * For individuals interested in weight loss without surgery, or for bariatric patients experiencing weight regain, try our Medical Weight Loss Program, featuring great tasting Robard's New Direction Products! Weekly visits with our dietitians help you develop skills to lose weight (and keep it off) and customize the meal replacement plan to meet your needs! Call our office at 609.537.6777 to schedule your first appointment with Dr. Anwar.

MINDFUL EATING

by Erica Booz, Dietetic Intern

In coordination with Theresa Balestrieri, Bariatric Dietitian

Mindful eating stems from a philosophy of mindfulness and focuses on one's emotions, thoughts and physical sensations in the present moment and being aware of (rather than reacting to) the surrounding situation and choices. Eating mindfully means using all your emotional and physical senses to experience the joy in the food you are eating and expressing gratitude for your food to improve your overall eating experience. Mindful eating is a great strategy to help with enjoying your foods more without having to eat as much of it. For many of us, our eating practices are mostly mindless, especially when eating on the go or in front of TV's, phones, or other devices. Socializing and eating with friends and family can be another form of mindless eating that distracts us from determining our fullness level. When we engage in mindless eating, we ignore our bodies' signals and eat past the point of feeling full, especially when we are eating foods that are emotionally comforting. It's choosing foods that we enjoy, despite the caloric density, and over-indulging.

continued on page 2





When we choose to eat mindfully, we honor our food preferences, become more aware of nutritious choices, and strike a balance in eating foods that taste good and are still healthy, all of which helps us to help manage our weight. Mindful eating does not mean we are depriving ourselves of some of our favorite foods, because self-deprivation tends to back fire over time. Eating mindfully is a life-long practice, so use these tips to get you started!



MINDFUL EATING TIPS

Portion out your meal and **SIT** at a **TABLE** to focus on just **EATING**

- Turn off screens, devices, and other distractions. Set your table with candlesticks or some other gentle lighting and put on calming music to create a place where you want to spend time. Next, see how long it takes you to eat your portioned meal. If you ate your meal in less than 20 minutes, your brain is still telling you to continue eating. The next time you sit down for a meal, set a timer for 30 minutes and use that time to eat a normal-sized meal. By the time your 30 minutes is up, your brain has likely caught up to recognizing your fullness level and you are less likely to serve yourself more food.

- Some may find it challenging to sit a table, slow down, and just focus on eating. If this sounds like you, try eating with your non-dominant hand or eating with chopsticks to help slow down. You can also try using smaller utensils or even taking smaller bite sizes to limit how much food you can put in your mouth at once. Each bite should be chewed at least 25 times before it is swallowed, so try putting the utensil down between each bite to see how the food feels in your stomach after you swallow—don't pick up your utensil again until you're ready for another bite!
- We tend to over-eat when dining with friends or family because we are distracted by conversation, so when you do dine with others, try to eat silently for at least five minutes to have a mindful moment. Use the time to think about what it took to produce your meal, from the farmer to the grocery store to your table. This can help increase your appreciation of the meal and savor the flavor more.

Physical Hunger vs. Head Hunger

There are moments in the day when we find ourselves standing in front of the fridge or cabinet, not because we are physically hungry, but because we are head hungry. Physical hunger is when our stomach is growling for food, head hunger is when we are experiencing a craving, or are eating because we are bored, tired, stressed, or upset. If you find yourself wandering into the kitchen when it's not time for a meal, take a deep breath and ask yourself, "Am I really hungry?" If the answer is "no", find an activity that you enjoy that will serve as a healthy distraction, like going for a walk, calling a friend, crafting, or shopping.



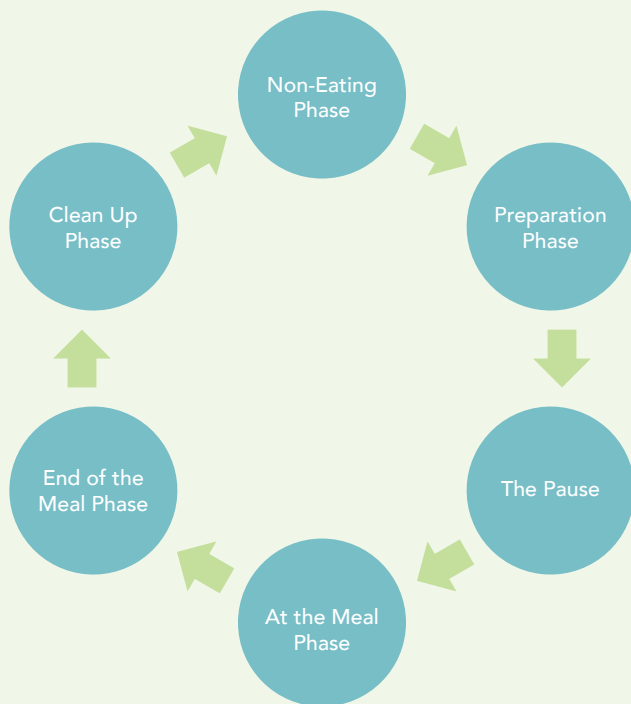
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THE EATING CYCLE

Eating behaviors are often related to a complicated web of decisions. Mindful eating can help increase your awareness of your food choices and develop healthier eating habits so your current mental and emotional state are less likely to dictate what you are eating and how much. It can be helpful to look at eating as a cyclical process, broken up into six phases.



1. The Non-Eating Phase

This occurs after you eat and typically lasts three to four hours, when you are free of thoughts involving food. You are not physically hungry at this time because your stomach isn't empty.

Once you're beyond three to four hours since you last ate, this phase ends as the physical sensation of hunger returns. Sometimes it is difficult to determine when you are physically hungry or just head hungry, so if you're not sure, try to distract yourself. If distraction works, chances are you are

not physically hungry. Physical hunger only goes away when you eat. This is when you enter the next phase of eating.

2. The Preparation Phase

This is when you are preparing a meal or snack or making a food choice. This can happen hours before you eat, like when you pack your lunch in the morning, or in minutes when you select food in a cafeteria or order takeout.

The preparation phase includes two important questions:

What should I eat? This entails finding a balance between nutrition knowledge, food preferences, and cravings. It's really a two-part question—"What do I want to eat, and what would help my body?"

How much should I eat? Consider what amount of food will fill your stomach comfortably without over-filling.

3. The Pause

This is the most meaningful part the meal, because this is when we set our intention to eat in a state of being fully aware of our food and how it satisfies us. During the pause, you want to think about how each bite feels as it hits your stomach, instead of just gobbling it up and looking for more. Make sure to pause many times throughout the meal to decide if another bite will make you more comfortable, or uncomfortably full. Set a clear intention to not overfill your stomach.

4. At the Meal Phase

This is when it is time to eat because physical hunger is present! Notice how each bite helps diminish that hungry feeling and physical sense of emptiness. This phase can be challenging for many people because they notice that physical hunger ends sooner than head hunger,

continued on page 4





which can fan your desire to keep eating. This is why it is essential to eat slowly and allow your signal of satiety to reach your brain. You should work on having 20–30 minute eating events to allow time for that signal to reach your brain so you learn to stop eating when you're satisfied.

5. End of Meal Phase

This is the time when you are trying to find a comfortable level of fullness. It can be helpful to pause when you are halfway through your meal in order to notice the shift from hungry to full. Ask yourself, "am I comfortably full now, or would another bite make me more comfortable?"

6. Clean Up Phase

Once you acknowledge you are comfortably full, this is when you stop eating and clean up. If you don't clean up at this point, you could fall victim to environmental cues to continue eating because food is still around you. Remind yourself how content and comfortable you feel and how you don't want to ruin that joy by over-filling your stomach. Try scraping your plate and putting away and packing up leftovers for lunches so you are not tempted to eat more.

Mindful eating is a practice that can help improve eating habits, decrease the likelihood of binge eating, and boost our general outlook. It also promotes nonjudgmental attitudes about eating, which helps remove the feelings of guilt after eating something that isn't the most healthy option. What's done is done, move on and try to do better at the next meal or snack.



Try this mindful eating exercise at your next meal. Approach it with an open mind and gentle curiosity!

1. **Find a quiet spot** where you can focus all your attention on what you are eating.
2. Next, **choose a piece of food**, but before you do, ask "what is my body hungry for?"
3. **Take a bite** and notice the taste and texture.
4. **Look at the food**, notice the color and the weight.
5. **Smell the food**, take in the aroma and notice how it affects you.
6. **Taste the food**, place it on your tongue and notice the response of your salivary glands.
7. **Bite the food**—do not eat it in one mouthful—listen to the chewing sounds and feel the texture on your tongue.
8. **Chew the food**, and pay attention to how the texture changing as you chew it.
9. **Swallow the food**, take the time to feel the sensation of the food as it travels down your throat to your stomach.
10. Now **observe the effects** this food has on your whole being. How are you feeling right now?
11. Lastly, **give thanks or express gratitude** for everything that brought the food to your table.



RECIPE OF THE MONTH



PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES ◀

NUTRITION INFO – PER SERVING
(two cookies)

252 CALORIES ▪ 29.7G CARBOHYDRATES
4.5G PROTEIN ▪ 13.6G FAT

HUNGRY FOR THIS?

TRY THIS INSTEAD

Satisfy your craving for peanut butter cookies with a delicious no-bake option that is low in calories and fat!

▶ PEANUT BUTTER COOKIE DOUGH BITES

Recipe and image adapted from healthyfitnessmeals.com

NUTRITION INFO – PER SERVING
Makes 4 – 5 servings (two cookie dough bites)

112 CALORIES ▪ 7.6G CARBOHYDRATES
9.2G PROTEIN ▪ 5G FAT

INGREDIENTS

- 2 scoops whey protein (vanilla)
- 2 tbsp maple syrup
- 2 tbsp coconut oil (melted)
- 6 tbsp powdered peanut butter
- 1 handful dark chocolate chips



DIRECTIONS

1. Add all ingredients to a small bowl and use a fork or spoon to combine them.
2. Once evenly combined, take a spoonful of the mixture and gently roll it into a ball using your hands.
3. Repeat for the remainder of the mixture until you have 8 – 10 evenly sized balls.



Product of the Month THE MINDFUL EATING WORKBOOK

The Mindful Eating Workbook by Vincci Tsui, RD is a great way to work on your mindful eating practice! Eating mindfully takes practice, and this book offers helpful strategies for developing a healthier relationship with food. Available online for less than \$14 from retailers like Amazon and Walmart.

