

LESSON: Mindful Eating

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Define mindfulness and explain how it applies to food
- Understand, recognize, and recall examples of mindful eating practices
- Understand and describe the benefits of mindful eating
- Understand the difference between appetite and hunger and how to recognize the difference in your daily life

LEVEL:



MATERIALS:

- Activity Sheet: Level 4 - Appetite vs Hunger Infographic
- Activity Sheet: Level 4 - Mindful Eating Log
- Activity Sheet: Level 4 - Mindful Tracker
- PowerPoint: Level 4 - Mindful Eating
- Quiz: Level 4 - Mindful Eating

LESSON:

Starter: The purpose is to introduce the idea of being mindful and to teach students how to develop and apply healthy mindful eating practices within their daily lives. Students will learn how to answer critical questions, such as: What is mindful eating? Why is mindful eating important? How can I apply a mindful eating routine to my life?

Bring students together to start thinking and talking about these topics.

Section 1: What Does it Mean to Be Mindful?

*Ask Class: What do you think the word **mindful** means? When you hear the word **mindful**, what do you think of? *listen to response, build a definition together, recap and compare with the following**

Mindfulness is *focusing in on yourself and being aware of what you are doing*. In order to be mindful, it is important that you pay attention to your senses and your surroundings.

Section 2: How Can Mindfulness Apply to Food?

*Ask Class: How do you think being **mindful** can apply to food? *listen to response, create a list of responses, recap and compare with the following**

Similar to mindfulness, mindful eating encourages someone to take their time and listen to their bodies. This means paying attention to what you are eating, when and where you are eating, and to how you are feeling while you are eating it.

Section 3: Why Might Mindful Eating Be Important?

Did you Know? There are many benefits to incorporating mindful eating practices into your daily life!

*Ask Class: Can you think of some benefits of mindful eating? Why might it be important? *listen to response, create a list of responses, recap and compare with the following**

Mindful eating can allow you to create better relationships with food. Creating mindful eating habits can help you to understand when your body is hungry and when it is full. With mindful eating you can:

#1 Discover and stop distractions while eating. Distracted eating can cause you to lose track of how much you are eating and can cause you to not pay attention to when you are full. Recognizing distractions can allow you to focus on your food and how you are feeling.

Pro Tip: To help avoid distractions, put away all technology when at the table and focus on your food specifically.

#2 Understand the speed of your meal. Eating slower can allow you to have a better sense of when you are full. This could be something as simple as chewing slower.

Canada's Food Guide Tip: If you find yourself to be a fast eater, try placing your knife and fork down between bites to help slow down the speed of your eating!

#3 Understand the difference between emotional and physical hunger. By understanding the difference, you can understand what force is telling you to eat and whether your body is actually hungry.

Did You Know? If you are unsure if you are hungry, try drinking a glass of water first. Sometimes people confuse hunger with thirst!

#4 Get more enjoyment from your meals. By being mindful of your meal, it can allow you to really focus in on your senses and allow you to explore different flavors.

Section 4: How Can You Tell When You Are Hungry?

*Ask Class: Can anyone define hunger? *listen to response, build a definition together, recap and compare with the following**

Hunger is the body's need for food. It is a response from the body that tells us that we need to eat.

*Ask Class: Does anyone know what some signs of hunger may be? *listen to response, build a list together, recap and compare with the following**

Answers: Some signs of hunger can include a grumbling stomach, stomach pain, tiredness, dizziness, or even feeling cranky!

However, sometimes we can confuse hunger with appetite.

*Ask Class: Does anyone know what appetite is? *listen to response, build a definition together, recap and compare with the following**

Appetite is our want for food. Appetite can be triggered by our senses and the environment around us. Sometimes we are truly hungry, and other times we just desire the taste of a food. So, it is important to ask ourselves if we are truly hungry, or if we just want the taste of pizza or the texture of ice cream? If you are hungry, and have an appetite for a certain food, it is time to eat. If you are craving food, but not actually hungry, try looking forward to having the food next time your body needs energy and nourishment.

*Ask Class: Can anyone think of any appetite triggers (or examples of something that may cause you to feel like you want to eat)? *listen to response, build a list together, recap and compare with the following**

Answers: An example of an appetite trigger can be when you smell something really good and instantly feel a want for it (such as freshly baked cookies) or when you see something that looks really good and immediately crave it (such as a fresh slice of pizza).

*Ask Class: Why do you think it is important to understand the difference between hunger and appetite? *listen to response, build a list together, recap and compare with the following**

It is important to understand the difference between hunger and appetite because it can allow us to be mindful of if we feel like we want to eat because we are actually hungry or whether we just want to eat because something smells or looks good. It is important to listen to our bodies and eat when our bodies tell us they need food. By listening to our hunger cues, we can give the body what it needs.

Mindful eating also allows us to recognize the environment around us and it helps us to make healthier choices.

Section 5: How to Create a Mindful Eating Routine

*Ask Class: Can you think of some ways that you can include mindful eating in your lives?
*listen to response, create a list together, recap and compare with the following**

A great way to start introducing mindful eating into your life is by asking yourself some mindful questions.

Ask Class: Does anyone know what the 5 Ws are?

Answer: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How

Canada's Food Guide recommends that you ask these questions when you are eating to get a better understanding of your meal choices and to increase awareness of the way you eat.

- *What am I eating?*
- *Why am I eating?*
- *When am I eating?*
- *Where am I eating?*
- *Who am I eating with?*
- *How am I eating and how much am I eating?*

These questions can provide a guideline to start building healthy eating habits.

Summary: Wrap-Up and Take-Home Points

Mindfulness and mindful eating are important for recognizing true hunger and for getting more enjoyment from your meals. Try to use the tips from the lesson to adopt some mindful eating habits in your life today!

**Educators Note: For further facilitation, use the assigned quiz and activity sheets to recap the key concepts and to test knowledge learned from this lesson.*

Lesson adapted from Canada's Food Guide

REFLECTION NOTES: