



MINDFUL MEALS: ENHANCING DIGESTION THROUGH CONSCIOUS EATING

Although it might feel as though multitasking is the norm, the act of eating doesn't need to be a rushed or mindless activity. Slow down, tune in, and appreciate the nourishment that food provides.

Stress can become a constant companion, affecting not only our mental health but also our digestion. Clinical, Renal and Pediatric Dietician at Dieticians @Health, Monique Bailey, highlights, 'Stress itself has a major impact on digestion, making it more difficult for our bodies to absorb nutrients from food.'

Mindful eating, an approach that involves paying attention to the full sensory experience of digesting food, offers a reprieve from the hectic pace of modern life. By engaging our senses and being present during meals, we can enhance digestion and nutrient absorption.

'When the body is in a relaxed state, it directs blood flow towards the digestive organs, increasing the release of digestive enzymes and bile – essential components for efficient nutrient absorption and digestion,' explains Monique. 'As a result, mindful eating can lead to normalised bowel movements and improved overall digestive function.'

NAVIGATING EMOTIONAL EATING

Beyond its physiological benefits, mindful eating addresses

the psychological aspects of our relationship with food. Stress often triggers emotional eating, leading to unhealthy food choices and feelings of guilt. Monique emphasises, 'Mindful eating encourages us to become aware of why we are choosing certain foods.' By practising mindfulness and asking ourselves questions like, 'Will this cereal keep my blood sugar levels stable until lunch?', we can break free from emotional eating patterns and make choices that support our well-being.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR MINDFUL EATING

Incorporating mindfulness into our eating habits doesn't have to be complicated. Small changes, such as eating without distractions and checking in on our hunger levels, can make a significant difference. Monique offers practical advice: 'Eat at a table, away from your computer, phone, and television. Before eating, check in with yourself.'

How hungry are you? When we're starving, we eat too fast and don't chew our food thoroughly, which affects digestion,' she says. 'Try to chew each mouthful at least 30 times. Then, halfway through your meal, consider whether you're becoming full. Remember, you don't always have to finish everything on your plate.'



mental health



financial wellbeing



physical health



legal advice

For confidential assistance on physical health matters, contact your

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME
on toll-free 0800 004 770

SMS your name to 31581

THE HOLISTIC BENEFITS OF MINDFUL EATING

The benefits of mindful eating extend far beyond improved digestion. By making conscious food choices, we can stabilise our energy levels and support our mental well-being. Monique highlights, 'Mindful eating stabilises energy levels and allows us to choose food that supports healthy blood sugar regulation.' Additionally, mindful eating has been linked to increased serotonin production, promoting mood regulation and overall well-being.

EMBRACING MINDFUL EATING

In a world that prioritises speed and productivity, embracing mindful eating may seem counterintuitive. However, by slowing down and savouring each bite, we can nourish not only our bodies but also our minds and souls. As Monique reminds us, 'When we shift our focus to choosing foods that make us feel physically good instead of seeking an 'emotional reward', we can fully enjoy and taste the foods we are eating.' So, let's put down our forks, take a deep breath, and embark on a journey of mindful eating – one delicious bite at a time.

The information is shared on condition that readers will make their own determination, including seeking advice from a professional. E&OE.



**For confidential assistance on physical health matters, contact your
EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME
on toll-free 0800 004 770
SMS your name to 31581**