



# Staying Healthy AT HOME

## MINDFUL EATING IN TIMES OF STRESS

We've all had that moment—suddenly the bag or container of food is empty, and we don't remember eating it! The important thing is to not get down on yourself but, instead, tune in and notice what's happening. The following questions may be helpful:

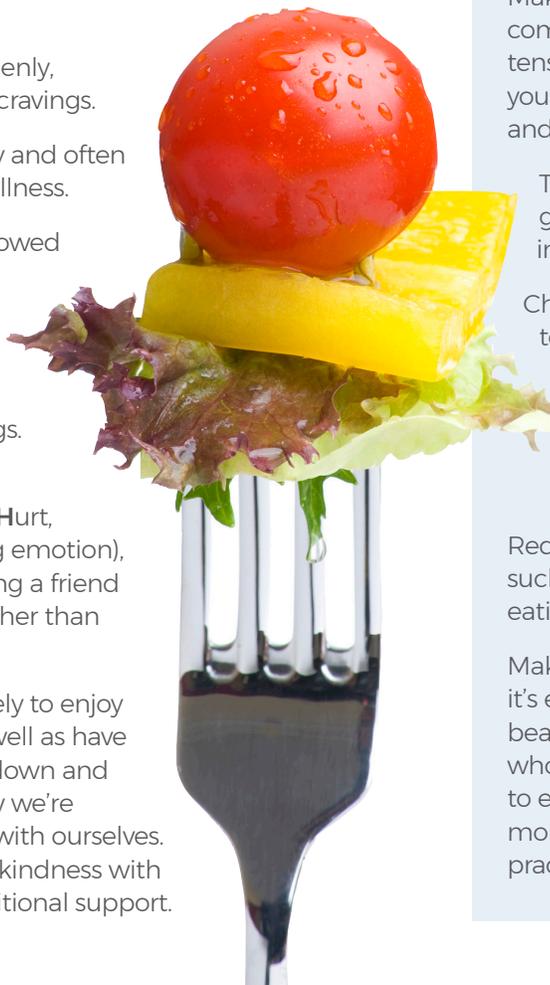
- What were you doing? Were you in front of the computer or TV?
- What type of food were you eating? Were you feeling stressed, bored, angry, or sad?
- Were you alone? If not, who else was around?

Tuning in to these “triggers” is the first step toward eating more mindfully. It's also important to differentiate between physical and emotional hunger:

- Emotional hunger comes on suddenly, sometimes in the form of specific cravings.
- Emotional hunger is hard to satisfy and often leads to eating past the point of fullness.
- Emotional hunger tends to be followed by feelings of regret, guilt and powerlessness.
- Emotional hunger is often a response to boredom or uncomfortable feelings.

You can try to HALT before eating and check in with yourself—if you're feeling **Hurt**, **Angry**, **Lonely**, **Tired** (or any other strong emotion), you might feel more nourished by calling a friend or taking a walk or a nap; something other than eating.

When we eat mindfully, we're more likely to enjoy the food and to feel more satisfied, as well as have an easier time digesting it. By slowing down and focusing on what we're eating and how we're feeling, we connect with our food and with ourselves. Above all, practice patience and loving kindness with yourself, and reach out if you need additional support.



### Strategies for Eating Mindfully

Begin before you take your first bite by thinking about the food you're about to eat. Consider where it came from and what it will do for your body.

Make sure that you're seated comfortably and not holding tension anywhere in your body. If you are, take a few deep breaths and try to release it.

Take a moment to express gratitude for the food and set an intention to eat mindfully.

Chew your food well and be sure to really savor it. What does it feel and taste like?

Pause in between bites to tune in and notice how you're feeling.

Reduce other distractions such as TV, working or driving while eating, talking on the phone...etc.

Make your meal visually pleasing—it's easy to create simple yet beautiful and colorful meals using whole food. Not only will it help us to enjoy the experience and feel more satisfied, it's a great way to practice self-care and boost mood.