How many of you can relate?

- “I can’t believe I ate all of that!”
- “Where did that bag of chips go?!?”
- “I blew it by eating that cupcake earlier. Pizza for dinner then!”
Why do we eat?

• For nourishment

• For entertainment?

• For comfort?
Why do we eat?

• For nourishment

• For entertainment?

• For comfort?
Tools You Can Use

- Identify mindless eating behaviors
- Learn ways to increase mindfulness at meal time
- Practice mindful eating skills
  *Please do not eat candy in front of you until directed to do so!
“Mindful Eating” - What Is It?

• Merriam Webster defines mindfulness as
  “the practice of maintaining a non-judgemental state of heightened or complete awareness of one’s thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis”
“Mindful Eating”—What Is It?

• Dr. Susan Albers defines mindful eating this way:

“Mindful eating is not a diet. There are no menus or recipes. It is being more aware of your eating habits, the sensations you experience when you eat, and the thoughts and emotions you have about food. It is more about how you eat than what you eat”.

Northwestern Medicine
“Mindful Eating” - What Is It?

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• Awareness of internal and external cues that trigger eating
  - Smells, sights
  - Emotions, feelings of hunger
What Does Mindless Eating Look Like?

• Eating until you are too full then feeling guilty

• Emotional eating
  - Eating when bored, stressed or anxious but not hungry

• Grazing on food without really tasting it

• Mindlessly munching while watching TV, on the computer, on phone, etc.

• Eating a meal at the same time each day whether you’re hungry or not

• Skipping meals, not paying attention to hunger cues
Mindful Eating for a Healthy Lifestyle

• How can mindful eating help me live a more healthy lifestyle?
  
  - Takes brain about 20 minutes to process body’s satiety signals (feelings of fullness)
  
  - Research has shown statistically significant improvements in blood pressure, lipid panels, health behaviors (physical activity) and psychological factors
Mindful Eating Exercise

*You need two pieces of chocolate for this exercise. Please raise your hand if you need more chocolate!
Mindful Eating Exercise

Eat one piece of chocolate like normal.
Mindful Eating Exercise

Practice eating mindfully with the second piece of chocolate.
Putting Mindful Eating into Practice

Mindful Eating Cycle

Why?
Why do I eat?

Where?
Where do I invest my energy?

When?
When do I want to eat?

What?
What do I eat?

How much?
How much do I eat?

How?
How do I eat?
Why Do I Eat?

• Many eat for other reasons than physical hunger

• “Why do I eat?” may be linked to triggers such as:
  - Physical hunger
  - Challenging/stressful situations
  - Visual cues
  - Other emotions such as boredom
  - Fatigue
Why Do I Eat?

• Remember: Emotions are **not** facts!
  - Provide context/insight as to how you were feeling at a moment that triggered you to eat
  - Feeling guilty, stressed, angry, happy, etc. prior to eating?
    • Also pay attention to how you felt after you ate

• Look at root cause of emotions
  - Stressed because of a deadline at work? Try to ease the source of that stress by working to set a schedule/to-do list, etc.
Putting Mindful Eating into Practice

Mindful Eating Cycle

- Why? Why do I eat?
- When? When do I want to eat?
- Where? Where do I invest my energy?
- How much? How much do I eat?
- How? How do I eat?
- What? What do I eat?
When Do I Want to Eat?

• Answer may depend on time of day, physical hunger cues, or emotions

• By becoming aware of “when” you can work to break the cycle of mindless eating
  - “Crave a doughnut when I go to the break room every day for my morning break”
  
  - “I eat when I’m stressed”
  
  - “I’m starving by 11:00 am every day”
Putting Mindful Eating into Practice

Mindful Eating Cycle

- Why?
  - Why do I eat?
- Where?
  - Where do I invest my energy?
- When?
  - When do I want to eat?
- How much?
  - How much do I eat?
- What?
  - What do I eat?
- How?
  - How do I eat?
What Do I Want to Eat?

• Do you choose foods based on:
  - Convenience?
  - Taste?
  - Comfort?
  - Nutrition?
Putting Mindful Eating into Practice

Mindful Eating Cycle

- Why? Why do I eat?
- When? When do I want to eat?
- Where? Where do I invest my energy?
- How much? How much do I eat?
- How? How do I eat?
- What? What do I eat?
How Do I Eat?

• Do you sit down and eat with intention?

• Is your eating rushed? Mindful? Distracted? Secretive?

• High likelihood for distracted eating in our on-the-go, high-tech society
Putting Mindful Eating into Practice

Mindful Eating Cycle

- **Why?** Why do I eat?
- **When?** When do I want to eat?
- **What?** What do I eat?
- **How much?** How much do I eat?
- **How?** How do I eat?
- **Where?** Where do I invest my energy?
How Much Do I Eat?

• Portions may be decided on a variety of factors
  - Physical fullness cues
  - Package size
  - Habit

• May have been taught to “clear your plate” before you were finished at the table
  - Problem: portion sizes have grown over the years
  - 20 minutes for the brain to catch up with the body
Putting Mindful Eating into Practice

Mindful Eating Cycle

Why?
- Why do I eat?

Where?
- Where do I invest my energy?

When?
- When do I want to eat?

How much?
- How much do I eat?

What?
- What do I eat?

How?
- How do I eat?
Where Does the Energy Go?

• After you eat do you feel:
  - Invigorated?
  - Sluggish?
  - Shameful?
  - Energized for the rest of the day?
Getting Started

• Write down answers to these questions
  - Look for triggers/barriers and ways to overcome

• Prepare responses for negative self-thoughts
  - You are taking the right steps to nourish and care for yourself. You deserve to be loved and cared for!

• We are our own worst critic
  - Practice self-compassion
  - Take away the guilt/stigma of over-eating or eating less healthful foods
  - Live in the “gray”
Getting Started

• Be patient!
  - You might fail your first few times and that’s okay!
  - Pay attention to what was challenging and work to fix it

• This does not make you more self-indulgent
  - One of the most powerful feelings is being able to overcome a situation through mindfulness than “white-knuckling it” with willpower
Suggestions for Getting Started

• Identify areas of mindless eating in your life
  - Go through each step and write down barriers and ways to overcome

• Eat without distraction and slow down
  - Set a kitchen timer for 20 minutes and eat through the allotted time

• Practice portion control
  - Use a salad plate instead of a dinner plate
  - Fill half the plate with vegetables (non-starchy), ¼ plate meat and ¼ plate starch (bread, rice, pasta, starchy vegetable)
Suggestions for Getting Started

• Try eating with your non-dominant hand

• Use chopsticks if you don’t normally use them

• Use exercise we practiced when eating using all 5 senses

• Take small bites and chew well

• Ask yourself, “Am I hungry?” before heading to the kitchen
  - If not, distract yourself by going on a walk, cleaning, calling a friend, etc.
Tools You Can Use

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Sources

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• http://www.todaysdietitian.com/newarchives/030413p42.shtml

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Questions?

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Thank you!