

# Mindful Eating Basics

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# Making the Connection

- *Indian Health Service Mission ...* to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.

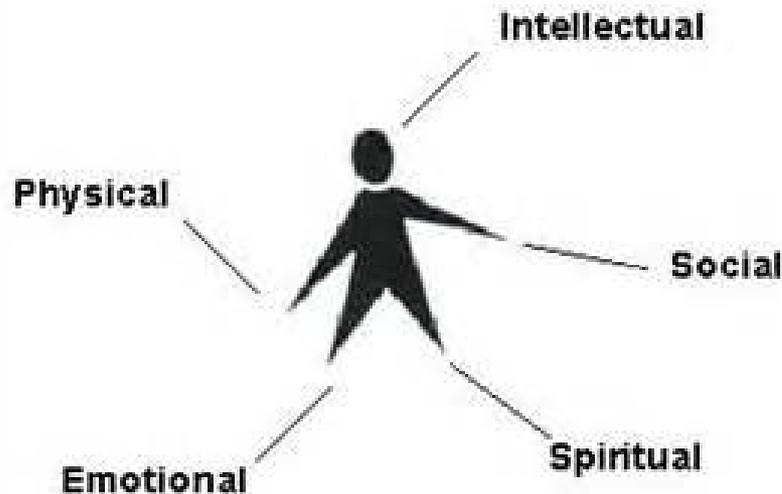


Image from  
<http://paandhealth.blogspot.com/>



# Shame and Diabetes Self-Management

- Sometimes simply having the diagnosis of diabetes brings a feeling of shame, as if that person did something wrong to have it.
- You may witness:
  - “I’m a bad diabetic” statements.
  - Not testing because they do not want to see “the number.”
  - Poor eye contact.
  - Defensiveness over discussing “their number” (Hgb A1c) or being referred to see the dietitian or nurse educator *again*.

# Shame May Look Like...

Think about the foods you usually eat. Put a check ✓ on the line next to the foods you eat at least once a week. Sections marked with a ↗ will significantly increase your blood sugar.

List 1	List 2	List 3
<b>Non-Starchy Vegetables</b>	<b>↗ Starchy Foods</b>	<b>↗ Sweets</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, okra	<input type="checkbox"/> Corn, Peas, White potatoes	<input type="checkbox"/> Cake, Pudding, custard
<input type="checkbox"/> Beets, carrots, radishes, turnips, parsnips	<input type="checkbox"/> Refined/enriched pasta, noodles, or macaroni (white, not whole grain), Dumplings	<input type="checkbox"/> Candy, candy bars
<input type="checkbox"/> Bell Peppers (Green, Red, Yellow), Peppers (chili jalapeño, habanero)	<input type="checkbox"/> White or "wheat" bread, Whole grain crackers, Dinner roll, Other crackers	<input type="checkbox"/> Cookies, vanilla wafers
<input type="checkbox"/> Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage	<input type="checkbox"/> Corn bread, Tortillas,	<input type="checkbox"/> Pie (all types- fruit, custard, fried, meat)
<input type="checkbox"/> Green or yellow beans	<input type="checkbox"/> Cream of wheat, farina, grits	<input type="checkbox"/> Ice cream, popsicles
<input type="checkbox"/> Leafy Greens (kale, poke, mustard, collard, spinach), Lettuce (romaine, leafy green or red)	<input type="checkbox"/> White rice	<input type="checkbox"/> Sugar (all types: honey, syrup, molasses, agave)
<input type="checkbox"/> Mushrooms, Onions (all types), celery, fresh garlic	<input type="checkbox"/> Ready-to-eat (dry) cereals	<input type="checkbox"/> Jam and jellies
<input type="checkbox"/> Squash (yellow, spaghetti, Crook neck), Zucchini	<input type="checkbox"/> Granola or other snack bars, Graham crackers	<b>↗ Starchy Foods</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tomato, tomatillo, eggplant	<b>↗ Fruit</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Biscuit, Fry bread, Donuts
<b>↗ Starchy Foods</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Canned fruit	<input type="checkbox"/> Potato or corn chips
<input type="checkbox"/> Sweet potato, yams	<input type="checkbox"/> Banana	<input type="checkbox"/> Fried vegetables (okra, squash, etc)
<input type="checkbox"/> Acorn and butternut squash	<b>↗ Milk &amp; Yogurt</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Gravy
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown and wild rice, Whole grain pasta, Oatmeal	<input type="checkbox"/> 2% milk	<input type="checkbox"/> Cream soups
<input type="checkbox"/> Beans and lentils	<input type="checkbox"/> Yogurt, low fat	<b>↗ Milk &amp; Yogurt</b>
	<b>Protein</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Whole milk
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ground turkey or beef	<input type="checkbox"/> Yogurt, full fat
		<b>Protein</b>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Spare ribs
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sausage (all varieties), Hot



# Mindful Eating Core Concepts

- Nonjudgement
  - Acceptance of limitations
  - Choice vs. power struggle
- Meditation
  - Thinking about the present moment
  - Allows compassionate responses to life vs. reactivity
- Self-compassion (self-kindness and self-nurturing)
  - Self-kindness = Equal
  - Counters judgement and shame

# Mindfulness Benefits

- Engaging in mindful eating has been shown in research to:
  - Be effective in addressing bingeing, emotional eating, and eating in response to emotional cues.
  - Create changes in physiological markers for cardiovascular risk.
  - Increase awareness of internal states of hunger and satiety.
  - Impact neural systems underlying emotional regulation (amygdala, parahippocampal area, insula).
  - Positive change in overall mental well-being.
  - Enhance sensory perception of food while also decreasing caloric intake.
  - Offer patients greater choices in meeting self-care needs combined with DSME-based approaches.
  - Decrease intake of sweets and reduce fasting glucose levels.

# *How* Do We Eat Mindfully?

# Mindful or Mindless?

- **Mindfulness** means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.

—Jon Kabat-Zinn

- **Mindless** means no use of the powers of the intellect: requiring little attention or thought; especially not intellectually challenging or stimulating.

—Webster's Dictionary Online

Let's Start by Considering This Bit of Wisdom:

Eat with the intention of feeling better than before you started.

# The Mindful Bite

- Before you take a bite, observe the food you have. Notice the texture, shape, colors. Notice the way the food or bite smells.
- Be aware of the movement of your hand as you move the bite to your mouth.
- Taste deeply. Do not do anything else while chewing. Pay attention to your mouth.
  - Is it bitter, sweet, salty, savory, umami?
  - What spices or herbs, if any, can you taste?
  - Is the texture smooth, stringy, crunchy, chewy?
  - Do you notice anything about this bite that is different than you noticed before?
- Once the bite is uniformly smooth, swallow. Pause and reflect on the taste before you bring more food to your mouth.

# Counting Chews

- Chew until the bite is smooth and liquefied in your mouth.
- If it takes you more than 20 chews, consider decreasing your bite size. This may depend on:
  - The type of food (pudding vs. celery)
  - The size of the bite
- Counting your chews can help you consider the amount you put on your fork or spoon. More small bites fool our brain into thinking we have had a larger volume of food.

# Counting Chews: Benefits

- Chewing food well helps with indigestion, heartburn, and delayed gastric emptying.
- It also helps one to slow down and fully taste their food.
- For those with diabetes, it gives time for insulin to be stimulated by the body before food begins to be absorbed.

# Silverware Down!



What do you do with your silverware between bites?

- Prepare the next bite?
- Play with or arrange your food?
- Keep it in your hand?
- Put it down?

# Silverware Down! (cont.)

- When your attention is turned to the next bite, then you miss experiencing the food that is already in your mouth.
- Keep your mind in the present, not on anticipating the next bite.
- If your mouth is full, your hands should be empty. When your mouth is empty, you can pick up your silverware or food again.

# Homework!

- Turn off your TV, phone, etc., and sit at the table without any distractions.
- For the first two to three bites of each item on your dinner plate, use the “Counting Chews” technique. Do you need to adjust your bite size?
- Between each bite, remember to use the “Silverware Down” technique. If the food is hand-held, put the food down. The goal is to have a rhythm to your eating, but also it is another step to push yourself to be in the present moment with the yummy stuff already in your mouth.
- After counting chews for a few bites and adjusting your bite size, use the “Mindful Bite” skill to deeply taste the next five to six bites. Approach each bite with curiosity and see what you discover.

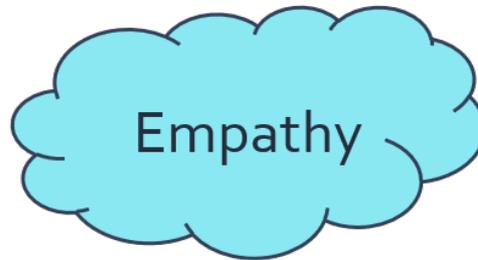
# Mindfulness Is Choosing Where You Put Your Attention



# *Why* Do We Eat Mindlessly?

# A Look at Hunger

Think about **what** you are hungry for that isn't food. Isn't **this** what we really crave in life?



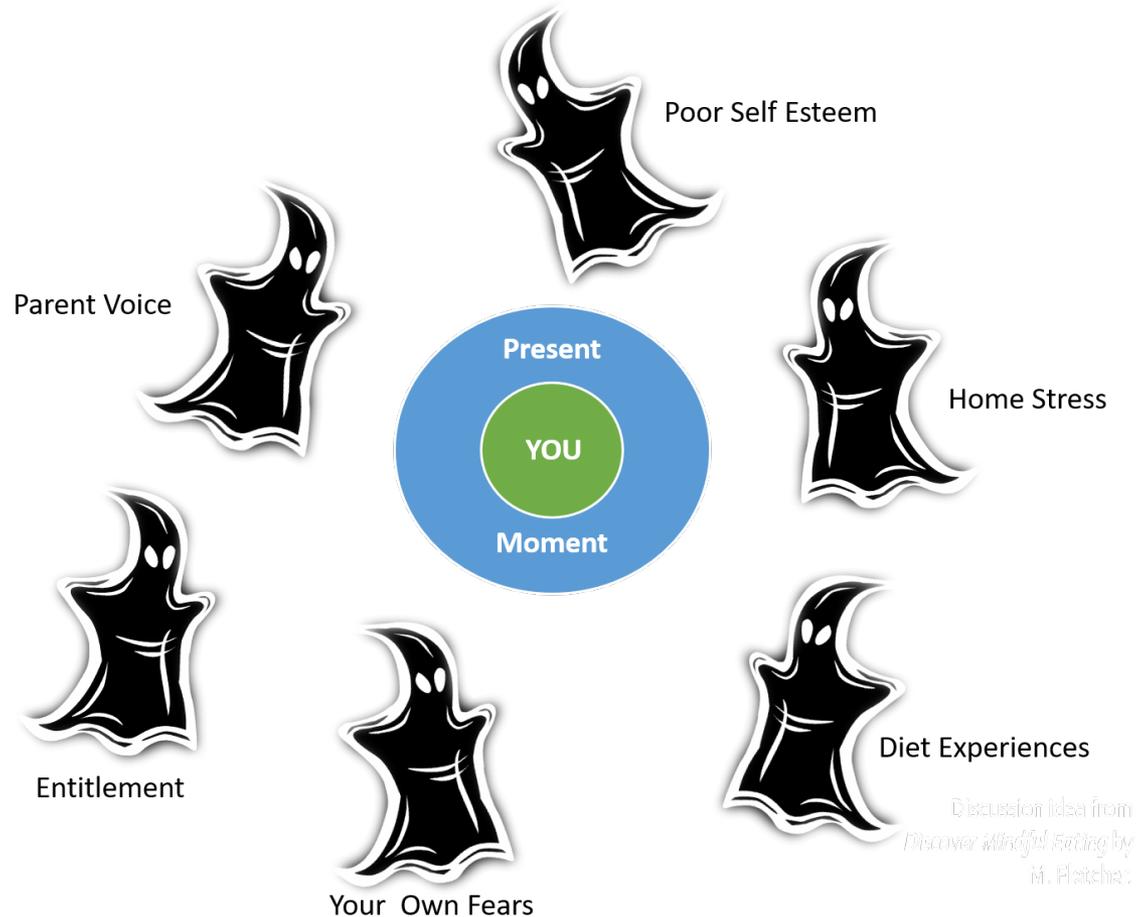
# Food Phantoms

- A lot of emotions can be present when you eat or see certain foods. Observing those emotions or the dialogue that occurs in your mind can help you identify food phantoms.
- Identifying these phantoms can help you see they are not really in the present moment. This takes away their power and puts you in control of your eating.



Discussion idea from *Discover Mindful Eating* by M. Fletcher

# Food Phantoms (cont.)



Discussion idea from *Discover Mindful Eating* by M. Fletcher

# Eat-Repent-Repeat Cycle



# Food Diary Work Example

Over the next week, tune into factors (food phantoms) that are keeping you from being in the present moment with food.

- Who or what are your food phantoms?
- Which ones are hardest to ignore?
- Which ones can you control easily?
- What happens to the phantoms if you turn your attention completely to the food or the act of eating?

Discussion idea from *Discover Mindful Eating* by M. Fletcher

# Integrating Mindful Eating into Practice

- Ask open-ended questions.
- Use a food journal so the patient can be their own private investigator for recording facts. Get them outside of self-judgment and instead explore the feelings, actions, and dialogue in their heads “as it is.”
- Using the term “experiment” creates interest and gives the patient control.
- Use activities from *Discover Mindful Eating* workbook.
- Hold skills classes and have providers refer patients.
- For patients unreceptive to anything, work on awareness.

# One-on-one Mindful Eating Education

## **Patient 1 – Initial to 1-month follow-up**

- Hgb A1c in 1 month decreased from 9.1% to 8.3% at follow-up. 6.4% at 4 months.
- 28-pound weight loss at 4 months.
- Increased enjoyment of eating. Curious about trying new foods and choosing healthier options at restaurants.
- Choosing better snack options and placing them across the room at work.

## **Patient 2 – Progress over 7 months**

- Hgb A1c 9.9% at referral, 8.1% at 3 months, 6.9% at 8 months.
- Uncovered emotions and learned to deal with them with help of a counselor. Patient did not previously realize the extent of use of food for rewards or avoidance.
- Became aware of busyness to the point of exhaustion and the use of sweets to push through. Learned to give permission to rest instead.

# Favorite Quotes From Group Class

“I didn’t think I could get so full eating just a salad.”

“I didn’t know how I was going to make it through this meal without salt, but I learned to combine some of the foods in a bite to make it interesting.”

“Wow! I can apply this to my whole life!”

# Resources for Learning More

- Michelle May, MD <https://amihungry.com>
- Mindful Eating and Living (MEAL) <https://www.mindfuleatingtraining.com/>
- The Center for Mindful Eating <https://www.thecenterformindfuleating.org/>
- Megrette Fletcher for books, training, and retreats. <https://megrette.com/>
  - Several of her books have CEUs available through Skelly Skills.
- Intuitive Eating <https://www.intuitiveeating.org/>

Thank You!

# Other Resources (1)

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# Other Resources (4)

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