



# December 2016

## **This Holiday Season, Eat Mindful, Not Mindless**

It's the holidays and for most Americans, that means eating – lots of eating – followed by weight gain and a New Year's resolution to lose weight.

But why not take a healthier approach to what we eat during this holiday season and beyond?

According to a recent website survey, about 18 percent of people say it's hard for them to eat healthy because they don't want to stop eating their favorite foods. The good news is you don't have to. You can still enjoy your favorite occasional indulgences, but in moderation. It's all about being mindful of what you eat.

### **Mindless Eating**

Mindless eating is consuming food just because it's there. It's eating while distracted – watching TV, working at a computer or texting on our smartphones. It's eating for emotional comfort instead of for hunger. Simply put, it's not paying attention to what we eat which can lead to being overweight and even obesity.

“Mindless eating has always been an issue,” said Riska Platt, M.S., a registered dietitian and certified nutritionist for the Cardiac Rehabilitation Center at Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York. “The key to mindful eating is awareness. Just by paying more attention to what you eat, you're more likely to make beneficial changes.”

### **Awareness**

When you pay attention to what you're eating, you can make small changes that make a big difference. Here are some tips toward a more mindful approach:

**Control portions.** Especially during the holidays, know that you'll have more opportunities to eat festive snacks and desserts. You don't have to deprive yourself, just eat smaller portions and less often.

**Eat when you're hungry.** Just because the clock says noon doesn't mean you have to eat. If you're not hungry, wait until you are – just don't wait until you're famished because you might overeat. Also, don't eat just because the food is available. Learn more about why you might be eating when not hungry.

**Plan.** Prepare healthy snacks throughout the day. If you tend to get hungry between meals, bring along a 200-calorie, whole grain, high-fiber snack. Fiber keeps you feeling full longer. Learn how a little planning helps your heart, and your budget.

**Slow down.** Enjoy each bite and put your fork down while chewing, then take a drink between each bite. This gives your body enough time to trigger your brain that you are satisfied (not necessarily full).

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Use technology. As we continue to become increasingly distracted by modern technology, our focus on health can fall to the back burner. But it doesn't have to be that way. "We can actually use our smartphones and other electronic devices to help us," said Platt, a volunteer with the American Heart Association. "There are now apps that manage food records, count calories, help you track what you eat and even provide guidance on healthy food choices at the grocery store and restaurants."

Keep a food diary. Write down everything you eat, look at it, then identify why you ate it – was it hunger, stress, boredom? Then look for areas you can make adjustments and incorporate healthy changes. "Keeping a food diary is really key to awareness," Platt said. "Most people are surprised at all they've consumed when they review what they've eaten."

Ready to get started?

Source : American Heart Association and Web MD

## WebMD Food and Fitness Journal

Studies show (and successful losers have proven) that keeping track of what you eat and your activity level is **one** of the most powerful tools to help you shed unwanted pounds and keep them off for good.

Use this printable Food & Fitness Journal or check out the [personalized WebMD Food & Fitness Planner](#) to help keep you working toward your goals.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### MY FOOD JOURNAL

	SERVING	CALORIES
Breakfast		
		SUBTOTAL
Mid-Morning Snack		
		SUBTOTAL
Lunch		
		SUBTOTAL
Mid-Afternoon Snack		
Dinner		
		SUBTOTAL
Evening Snack		
		SUBTOTAL
<b>TOTAL CALORIES FROM FOOD</b>		

### MY FITNESS JOURNAL

Activity	DURATION	CALORIES
<b>TOTAL CALORIES FROM FITNESS</b>		

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