

The Lunchbox Nutritionist **Kathleen Searles MS, RD, LDN**



Hello! Can you believe that the holiday season is upon us already? This generally happy time of year can create anxiety if you are trying to improve your eating habits. This month's newsletter is about "Mindful Eating", an approach that helps you to slow down and savor your food. Try some of these mindful eating strategies to help you enjoy your holiday favorite foods and stop when you are satisfied (which may be before you are full!). In this newsletter I have also reprinted a blog that I wrote several years ago about Thanksgiving pies. I hope that you will enjoy reading about my little experiment in portion control!

- Kathleen Searles, MS, RD, CSSD, LDN

What is Mindful Eating?

"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 that you have about food. It is more about how you eat than what you eat."

-Susan Albers

Principles of Mindful Eating



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Principles of Mindfulness:

- Mindfulness is deliberately paying attention, non-judgmentally.
- Mindfulness encompasses both internal processes and external environments.
- Mindfulness is being aware of what is present for you mentally, emotionally and physically in each moment.
- With practice, mindfulness cultivates the possibility of freeing yourself of reactive, habitual patterns of thinking, feeling

and acting.

- Mindfulness promotes balance, choice, wisdom and acceptance of what is.

Mindful Eating is:

- Allowing yourself to become aware of the positive and nurturing opportunities that are available through food preparation and consumption by respecting your own inner wisdom.
- Choosing to eat food that is both pleasing to you and nourishing to your body by using all your senses to explore, savor and taste.
 - Acknowledging responses to food (likes, neutral or dislikes) without judgment.
- Learning to be aware of physical hunger and satiety cues to guide your decision to begin eating and to stop eating.

Someone Who Eats Mindfully:

- Acknowledges that there is no right or wrong way to eat but varying degrees of awareness surrounding the experience of food.
 - Accepts that his/her eating experiences are unique.
- Is an individual who by choice, directs his/her awareness to all aspects of food and eating on a moment-by-moment basis.
- Is an individual who looks at the immediate choices and direct experiences associated with food and eating: not to the distant health outcome of that choice.
 - Is aware of and reflects on the effects caused by unmindful eating.
- Experiences insight about how he/she can act to achieve specific health goals as he/she becomes more attuned to the direct experience of eating and feelings of health.
- Becomes aware of the interconnection of earth, living beings, and cultural practices and the impact of his/ her food choices has on those systems.

Simple Tips to Become a More Mindful Eater



Eat Unplugged. Avoid watching TV, surfing the net, reading the paper, etc. while eating. When you eat, just eat.

Take time to focus on the sensations of the food. The smell, taste, and texture of the food. Try eating in silence (this may not always be possible, but experiment with it when you have a chance). Turn off external noises and when you eat, just eat.

Practice. Your current eating habits did not develop overnight, therefore neither will becoming a mindful eater. It will take practice and patience. Learn to re-eat and taste foods. Set aside time each week to practice mindful eating. Slow down, taste the food, set no boundaries on what can and cannot be eaten, pay attention to what you really enjoy eating compared to foods you eat “just because.”

Re-assess your favorites. We all have “favorite foods” but often times these so called “favorites” are really just habitual “favorites.” Meaning in the hustle and bustle of life, we have stopped asking ourselves “do I still really enjoy chocolate

News and Events:

Contact me today to create customized ideas to keep your family healthy with high quality lunches. Give me a call today (978-697-2834) or send an e-mail (ksearles@lunchbox-nutritionist.com) for more information!

What is Mindless Eating?



Eating food without tasting it.

Eating in a hurry, in the car, at the computer, or while you are watching TV. etc.

Eating while standing up and trying to multi-task what is going on around you.

Eating to the point of fullness and then feeling guilty about what and how much you ate.

Eating to feed emotions– it could be boredom, stress, anxiety, or pure happiness. Mindless eating can be feeding a feeling rather than hunger.

Eating because the clock says it is time to eat rather than listening to hunger signals from your body.

cake, or do I enjoy the memories and feelings that are associated with chocolate cake.” You will surprise yourself to learn what foods you really do love, compared to foods you eat because of habit or the feelings that are associated with it.

Re-connect with food. Plant a garden, cook, visit a local farm, make bread or pasta from scratch. Taking the time to re-connect with food and seeing where it comes from can give you a whole new appreciation of the nourishment you feed your body.

I confess. I practiced stealth health on my own family and at Thanksgiving Here's how it came about!

Three years ago, just before Thanksgiving, we were having dinner with friends and the hostess asked me to bring a pie. She said there would be 10 people, so I baked two pies. Understand, please, that I grew up thinking that a pie served 6! We all had a fine evening, enjoyed our pie, and as we were leaving the hostess handed me the second pie, untouched, to take back home with me. Astonished, I realized that this slim woman had cut a pie into 10 pieces!

This was food for thought indeed, a small portion of a delicious dessert could be satisfying and enough. So, I decided to experiment on my family. We usually have about 35 people for Thanksgiving, and the feast goes on for several days. That year, I volunteered to cut all the desserts. I cut the pies into 10 pieces and the cakes into 2" squares. (The cookies were on their own!) No one seemed to notice. We had some leftover desserts at the end and people took them home with them.

This went on for several years. Finally last year someone said, °What's going on with the desserts? We never used to have any leftovers and now there's always some to take home!" So I confessed to my experiment with cutting smaller pieces. It seems that everyone has been eating the same number of pieces of dessert regardless of the size. What a simple way to enjoy the holidays without over-eating!

So, if you are bold enough to follow in my footsteps, practice some °stealth health" with your family this Thanksgiving. Cut the desserts into smaller pieces, put a little less butter in the baked yams, serve the tastiest vegetables you can find. Have fun, and give thanks for all the wonderful foods you've tried this year!

Quote of the Month:

“The rhythm of life is becoming faster and faster, so we really don't have the same awareness and the same ability to check into ourselves. That's why mindful eating is becoming more important. We need to be coming back to ourselves and saying: 'Does my body need this? Why am I eating this? Is it just because I'm so sad and stressed out?' ”

Ignoring your hunger cues and skipping meals.

Why Become a Mindful Eater?

Stop the dieting cycle and learn to enjoy all foods.

Identify and reduce emotional eating.

Learn how to eat in all social situations.

Help create a healthy relationship with food.

Set a good example for young children, especially ones that are susceptible to eating disorders and disordered eating.

Manage your weight without dieting or restrictions.

Achieve weight loss by regulating eating patterns, decreasing binges, and increasing insulin sensitivity.

Recipe of the Month: Fruit Bombe



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Serves: 20 | Serving Size: 1/4 cup
Total Time: 15 min | Prep: 15 min | Cook: 0 min

Ingredients:

1 cup dried mango
1 cup dried pineapple
1 cup dried apricots
1 cup dried cherries
1 cup dried cranberries
12 ounces neufchatel cheese
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Directions:

Soak all fruits in warm water until soft, about 20 minutes.

Mix the cheese until smooth and add the vanilla; mix well.

Line a glass or metal bowl with plastic wrap. Drain the fruits and layer them with the cheese.

Freeze the bombe for several hours.

Un-mold and serve with nuts and dried cranberries

To serve:

- Dr. Cheung - Co-author of "Savor. Mindful Eating, Mindful Life."

Contact Information:

Beverly Office
900 Cummings Center
Suite 218U
Beverly, MA 01915

Newburyport Office
37 1/2 Forrester Street
Newburyport, MA 01950

Phone: 978-697-2834

Email:

ksearles@lunchbox-specialist.com

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Unmold onto a cake platter or stand or other large lovely platter. Decorate with dried fruits and nuts. You can refrigerate this until needed - and freeze for a few hours before service so it cuts neatly.

Chef's Tips:

Serve with whole grain crackers or soft warm whole wheat pita triangles.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1/4 cup Servings: 20

Amount Per Serving: Calories 94: Calories from Fat 37

Total Fat 4g, Saturated Fat 2g, Cholesterol 13mg, Sodium 58mg, Total Carbohydrate 14g, Dietary Fiber 1g, Sugars 12g, Protein 2g



About Kathleen Searles, MS, RD, LDN

I am a Registered Dietitian and am licensed to practice in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine. The exciting field of nutrition has been my passion ever since I took a foods class with my friends in high school.

Through my work in different states and different settings I have developed my philosophy of helping people improve their diets by finding foods that fit into their particular routines, budgets, and preferences. I look forward to helping you solve your nutrition challenges with tasty and satisfying foods.