



Be Mindful, it's a New Year

Have you thought about putting your health at the top of your New Year's Resolutions this January? Please read on for some information which may help you look after your health....

Have you heard of Mindful Eating?

This is about being conscious of why you are eating.

Are you hungry? Are you tired? Are you bored?

When you are so closely in touch with what is going on inside, you know the exact moment you are satisfied rather than stuffed or starving. To understand the why, what, when and how we eat, we have to be nonjudgmental. This allows us to take a closer look at our behaviour.

Among many things, mindful eating includes feeling the texture of food on your fingers as you pick it up, and noting the taste when you put the food on your tongue. It's being aware of, and listening to, the loud crunch of each bite, and the noise the chewing makes in your head. As you eat, take note of the pressure of your teeth grinding together.

When you are watchful, you notice how your stomach expands and feels fuller. You experience each bite from start to finish by slowing down every aspect of the eating process to be fully aware of each movement, swallow, aroma and feeling derived from eating.

How to do this:

(1) Choose *Mindful Portions* (see the HSE food pyramid for guidelines on food portions)

Slow down, look, feel, smell, chew, and concentrate on the taste of the food and the speed you are eating.

Pay attention to the here and now. Try not to do other activities such as reading, watching TV, using the computer while you are eating. Chew slowly, take your time. Before eating your next mouthful, lay down your cutlery and pause a few seconds. You are becoming mindful, you are paying attention.

(2) Eat when you are hungry

Watch out for your body's hunger cues as a signal that it is time to eat. Eat enough to feel satisfied and comfortably full, not stuffed. For most of us, this means eating every 3-5 hours or so. Eat balanced meals using the Food Pyramid as a guide.

(3) Eat until enough

We want to eat to satisfy ourselves. You can practice this while eating. On a scale of 1-10, 1= being starving and 10= being stuffed. Ask yourself how you feel during or after your meal. Aim to be around the 5 to 6 mark. This can be a useful way to prevent you from overeating when you still have food on your plate. Eat to appetite only.

This is a skill, and like all new skills, it takes practice and persistence.

Start the day off mindfully with breaking the fast from the night before:

Powerful Porridge (328 Calories)

30 g of Porridge

150 mls of low fat milk

Chopped medium banana

