Mindless Eating

Coming to terms with why we eat more than we think

What is Mindless Eating?

- Making food decisions that cannot be explained
- Eating from anything other than hunger
- Environment, emotional, and social things that drive food choices

Environmental

- Package size
- Plate shape
- Bowl size
- Cup shape
- Utensil size
- Positioning of food
- Visibility of food
- Lighting

Emotional

- Anger
- Hopelessness
- Lack of control
- Feeling underappreciated
- Boredom

Social

- Sight of others eating
- Hearing what others order at restaurant
- Food events
- Gathering around food
- Being pressured to eat
- Childhood eating habits
- Being part of the crowd, not sticking out

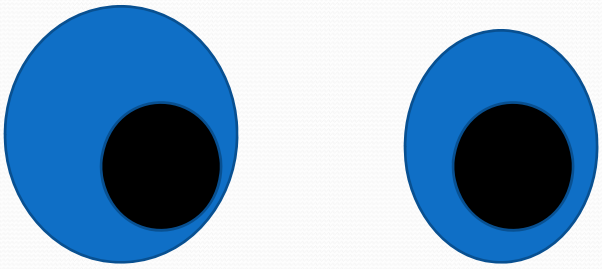
Tip 1: Be aware of what you consume

- See it *before* you eat it by pre-plating food
- See it *while* you eat it by keeping empty cans, bottles, bags, and plates on the table

When not paying attention, you consume 24% more calories

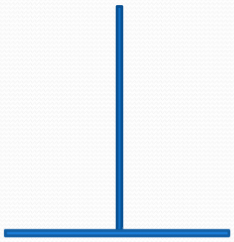
Tip 2: Use smaller plates

- When eating from large plate (12-inch), you consume 20% more than from a smaller plate (8-inch)



Tip 3: Use tall drinking glasses

Which line is longer?



The Triple Eating Threat - TV

- The less TV you watch, the skinnier you will be
  - Snack more
  - Move less
  - Distraction

Tip 4: Organize your fridge and cabinets

Fridge

- Use your crisper drawers for candy, soda and other less healthful items
- Place fruit, vegetables, yogurt, and other healthier options on top shelves

Pantry/Cabinets

- Move tempting snacks to bottom shelves or back of shelves
- Reseal packages and cover-up temptations (aluminum foil versus plastic wrap)

Tip 5: Find the right tribe

- Research has proven that the people you spend your time with predict your risk for obesity.
- If an average friend becomes obese, you are three times more likely to do the same.
- Eat with slower eaters, healthier eaters.
- Meet friends to walk rather than eat out.
- Surround yourself with active people.

Becoming a Mindful Eater

- Keep a food journal
  - Triggers to eat (smells, feelings, emotions)
  - When you eat
  - What you eat
  - How much you eat
- Be more mindful when eating
  - Attention to tastes, aromas, appearance of foods
  - Free from distractions
  - Eat when hungry, stop when satisfed (not full/stuffed)
  - Slow down and take at least 20 minutes
- Make mindless eating less convenient – change environment

Challenge

- Pick a problematic behavior that you can realistically modify
  - What would positive impact of making the change be?
  - What are not-so-good things about changing?
  - What will potential challenges of changing be?
- Create list of things that will help with making change
- Pick one or two things and set goal for change

Discussion questions

- Open up the line