



Practice Mindful Eating

At some point, we've all been caught clutching our stomachs and cursing the third helping of pasta we inhaled that night. For some reason, we just didn't think we were full at the time. Surely we must have still been hungry?

Turns out, our stomachs just aren't sensitive enough to notice how much we've eaten until 20 minutes or more after we've swallowed our food. Neither is the human stomach particularly good at noticing caloric differences in the foods we eat. So even if we take in enough calories to keep us going, our stomach tells us it's empty.

What does this mean in terms of our eating habits? We end up relying on our senses – eyes, noses and ears – to tell us when to stop eating. Stimuli in our environment – like bowls of candy in the office – act as psychological cues leading us to overeat. We may think we're smart enough to avoid these temptations, but countless studies have proven otherwise.

But don't despair. There are things you can do to take charge of your habits and combat mindless eating.

- **Play hard to get with junk food** – Make it harder to grab a piece of candy by putting some actual distance between you and it. Keep candy hidden at the back of the cupboard or on the other side of your office. Put up some behavioral barriers too, like allowing yourself a little piece of candy only after you've eaten a piece of fruit or serving of vegetable.
- **Top shelf, top of mind** – You'll inevitably think more about the type of food you see more often. So why not reorganize the fridge to make sure all the healthy stuff – like carrots and celery – are on the top shelf where you'll see them every time you open the door. Put soda and cheeses in the vegetable crisper, so you're less likely grab for them every time you open the fridge!
- **Portion control with smaller plates** – Trick yourself into eating smaller portions by using smaller plates. Be careful – don't downgrade in size too much so that it's obvious to your eye. Otherwise, your brain will see right through your trick, and you'll go back for another helping.
- **Eat with the family, but not family style** – Having big serving platters and plates on the table encourages you to keep spooning extra helpings onto your plate just because the food is in front of you. Instead, fill your plates away from the table. If you're eating out, choose restaurants where you get individual entrees portioned for one.
- **Remember the rule of 3** – When dining out, avoid going the whole 9 yards, ordering 3 courses, having drinks before, during and after the meal, and nibbling away on bread and butter. Instead, order your main entrée, and choose either: drink and dessert, or appetizer and bread.

.....
• **Identify eating tactics that work for you!**
• These are just a few of the ways you can curb mindless eating. The real trick is finding what works best for you. That's where the LiveLifeWell Registered Dietitian Christy Burkard can help. She'll work with you to identify tactics and create a plan to help you improve your eating habits. Get on track to achieving your health goals!
• Visit iLiveLifeWell.com to learn more or call **847-937-5001** to schedule an appointment today.
.....