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Bye-Bye Diets:
A Guide To Intuitive Eating

Enjoy your food, nourish your body, and leave the guilt behind

By Crystal Pace, MS, RD

ABOUT CRYSTAL

Crystal is a Registered Dietitian (RD) with the Anticancer Lifestyle Program. She is also a yoga teacher and health coach who is passionate about Anticancer living. After graduating with her B.S. degree in nutrition from the University of New Hampshire, Crystal went on to pursue her M.S. degree in nutrition from New York University.

Crystal believes in the importance of looking at all aspects of lifestyle, and taking a personalized, holistic approach toward optimal health and well-being. She coaches in the ACLP module areas of Diet, Fitness, and Mindset. In her free time, Crystal enjoys trying new recipes, visiting farms, shopping at farmers markets, doing yoga, being outdoors, traveling, reading and most importantly: living an Anticancer lifestyle!

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Objectives

In this e-book, you will be introduced to specific tools and resources you can use to gain control over out-of-control eating, and to improve your overall eating habits.

You will learn:

✲ How to tune into and honor your hunger and fullness levels before, during, and after meals

✲ The importance of reconnecting to the pleasure and satisfaction of the eating experience, and to avoid feelings of deprivation

✲ How the feeling of being deprived around food can actually be counterproductive when trying to gain control of your eating habits

✲ The practice and benefits of mindful eating, and how it can help you become more aware of your hunger, fullness, and satisfaction signals

✲ A step-by-step guide to mindful eating

Nutrition & Cancer

First, let's talk about the important role of nutrition in minimizing the risk of chronic health conditions such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, autoimmune conditions, digestive issues, and more.

According to the World Health Organization and the American Institute for Cancer Research, it is estimated that up to 50% of all cancer cases are preventable by changes in lifestyle behaviors. Factors that increase risk include poor dietary choices (such as processed foods, red meats, low fiber), alcohol, smoking, physical inactivity, and UV radiation. **Diets high in fruits and vegetables may protect against certain types of cancer. Along with a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy body weight has been found to reduce cancer risk.** Note that this does not mean excess body weight causes cancer, only that weight and cancer are linked in ways we have yet to fully understand.

It is important to emphasize that an individual's weight is determined by many factors, including genetics, medications, medical conditions, race and ethnicity, diet, exercise, stress, and more. In the Anticancer Lifestyle Program, we advise focusing on health-promoting behaviors that you can control — such as how you manage stress, how much you sleep and move, and what you eat — versus focusing on a number on the scale. A healthy body weight looks different on each of us. **Research supports that engaging in health-promoting behaviors can improve health and decrease risk of disease, regardless of changes in weight.**

A Healthy Relationship With Food

An understanding of the health consequences of poor diet, along with social pressures to look thin, can make it very easy to succumb to food fear. This can often lead to restricting certain food groups and weight cycling (or "yo-yo" dieting), which is repeatedly losing weight from dieting, and subsequently re-gaining it back. Our relationship with food can easily become distorted, and have negative effects on our food choices.

I'd ask you to consider that healthy eating is not just about eating nutritious food to nourish our bodies. It also involves having a healthy relationship with food.

What does a healthy relationship with food look like?

To start with, I can tell you what it *doesn't* look like. It doesn't look like having a lot of guilt around eating and food choices, or feeling shame based on what we're eating, or like we are morally good or bad based on our food choices. It doesn't look like telling yourself that you were "good" one day, or "bad" another. We need to remove the sense of moral judgment — of ourselves and others — surrounding food.

OK, so how do we achieve this? How do we finally become more at ease around all foods and start to lessen feelings of being out-of-control with our eating? How do we improve our health and well-being while decreasing our preoccupation with — and guilt and stress around — food?

I'll give you a hint: it doesn't start with dieting.

Dieting usually involves restricting certain food groups and calories in general, in order to change one's body shape and size. Motivations for dieting vary. Some people are concerned about cholesterol or other health concerns. Many of my clients want to get back to a certain "look" they had when they were younger. **No matter what the motivation, here's a not-so-secret secret: *diets don't work*. As a matter of fact, they can actually cause your eating to become more out-of-control.**
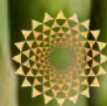
Here are a few key reasons why diets don't work:

✳ <u>According to studies</u>, **95% of all dieters will regain their lost weight (and sometimes more) within 1 to 5 years.** It gets worse: <u>Research has found</u> that individuals who have a history of dieting or who are actively dieting, are actually at **an increased risk for gaining more weight than when they first started.**

If that's so, then why are there so many weight-loss programs and advertisements promoting diets and other ways to lose weight? Make no mistake: at <u>more than $70 billion dollars a year in revenue</u>, **weight loss is a big business.** It's advisable to bring a healthy dose of skepticism to any sensational claims, especially since many of the food and diet influencers you see on social media lack a background in nutrition.

✳ **Dieting itself can cause out-of-control eating**, by increasing cravings for restricted foods. This can result in binge eating. I see this a lot with my clients who have a history of dieting. The feeling of deprivation led to periods when they "fell off the wagon" or "failed their diet", which led to binging on the exact foods that had been restricted on the diet.

✳ **Dieting can cause biological changes that make us retain weight.** Some people diet by restricting calories, and some by avoiding entire food groups, such as carbohydrates. **Either form of food restriction sends a signal to our brains that we are starving.** Since our bodies are programmed to survive, they react by causing hormonal changes that slow our metabolism and make us more likely to retain more fat — both of which are counterproductive when trying to lose weight.

Many people go on and off diets, which, as mentioned above, can lead to **weight cycling, or "yo-yo" dieting.** Weight cycling describes a condition in which a person has large variations in their body weight over time. Many of us have experienced this vicious cycle of losing a lot of weight on a diet, then gaining it right back. Wash, rinse, repeat.

Weight cycling from diets is <u>harmful to our health</u>. As a matter of fact, it is <u>more harmful to health</u> than if people had just remained at their initial weight before they started dieting.

Dieting also disconnects us from our bodies by **interfering with our natural signals for hunger and fullness**, which cause us to want to eat — or to stop eating. When we diet, we're making our food choices based on self-imposed restrictions (such as a calorie quota; eating a small food portion regardless of hunger level; limiting fats or carbs or proteins to a certain number of grams). **These artificial rules don't allow us to sense what we really need.** Some of my clients wind up over-exercising, which can also be detrimental.

It's important to remember that **our fantasy of what we think our healthy or ideal body looks like sometimes does not reflect the actual ideal weight range for our age, body type, or genetics.** For example, you may perceive your healthy body weight to be a weight that you achieved when you were over-exercising and restricting your eating. These are unsustainable behaviors for most individuals. Our biologically healthy body weight is the weight we achieve by engaging in healthy exercise habits and listening to our body's internal cues for eating.

In addition to biological damage, dieting can also cause emotional harm. Falling off or deviating from diets can lead to a sense of hopelessness and failure. My clients often report a decrease in self-esteem and a sense that their willpower is weak. **This negative self-talk increases stress levels** — and we all know that excess stress and feelings of hopelessness can be harmful to our health and well-being.

These negative or hopeless feelings can become exacerbated around the holidays, when people are often surrounded by friends and family—and foods laden with sugar and fat. They don't trust themselves to adhere to their strict diets and often are not able to. **As our self-confidence and self-trust erodes, we are at greater risk for eating disorders.**

The Harm of Deprivation

We can't really discuss out-of-control eating without addressing deprivation. I can't stress this enough: **when you are deprived of something, your desire for it will increase**. The simple idea that a food could be banned can promote overeating.

As an example, **if you tell yourself that *next* week you are going to stop eating certain foods, the very threat of that looming deprivation will likely cause you to eat more of these foods *this* week.** I see this a lot with sugar. The self-imposed threat of eliminating sugar leads to consuming more of it than people would normally. This is basic psychology: when we tell ourselves that we shouldn't have something, that we can't have something, that something is bad, it actually causes us to fixate on it — and want it more.

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In dieting, we call this fixation on the forbidden "The Last Supper Effect".

In my practice, I call it the "throwing-in-the-towel effect" or the "what-the-heck effect". **I see this a lot with my clients — binging on a food simply because it was forbidden.** This can launch a vicious cycle: Overeating a "bad" food serves as "proof" that you need to restrict this food because you can't control yourself. As a consequence, we lose trust in ourselves and feel even more out of control with our eating. And round and round it goes. These cycles are tough to break.

Where to begin?

First, let's look at how we define **the goal of healthy eating: to enjoy a variety of nutritious foods and have a healthy relationship with food. A healthy relationship with food entails not feeling guilt, shame, self-judgment, or a sense of deprivation surrounding one's food choices. It involves not eating too little, nor too much, and being satisfied with your food choices.** Healthy eating improves not only our physical health, but our mental and emotional health as well.

The Hunger/ Fullness Scale

One of my favorite tools to use in promoting healthy eating is the Hunger/ Fullness scale. The scale goes from one to ten: one is ravenous, and ten is feeling so full that you feel sick and uncomfortable.

Everyone's signals can be different, but in general:

1. **When you are a "one"** on the Hunger/Fullness scale, **you are so hungry that you're starving**, you feel weak, nauseous, shaky, dizzy, and lightheaded. All you are thinking about is food. You might feel "hangry" —so hungry that you're angry.

2. **A "two" is when you're very hungry**, feeling somewhat irritable and anxious, and want to eat everything in sight.

3. **If you are a "three"** you're hungry and your stomach may be growling, but **you are not yet uncomfortable**. This might even feel like a pleasant hunger, when you are looking forward to eating but not feeling desperate.

4. **When you're a "four", you are slightly hungry.** Some mild signals occur that tell you your body needs food but you can wait to eat.

5. **A "five" is neutral**, when you feel neither hungry nor full.

6. **A "six" is when you are filling up but still comfortable.** You can eat more but you are physically full. You have had enough food on a biological level.

7. **A "seven" is when you're full and satisfied, but not yet uncomfortable.** The sense of hunger is completely gone at this point. **Eating past this point would be considered overeating.**

8. **An "eight" is when you start feeling a little bit too full**, and it's "loosen your belt" time. This often feels slightly uncomfortable.

9. **A "nine" is when you feel stuffed and uncomfortable**, and might be tempted to loosen your pants.

10. **A "ten" is that Thanksgiving dinner kind of fullness feeling**: sick and extremely uncomfortable.

I advise that you use this scale not as a rule, but as a tool. Eat when you reach a "three" or "four". This is when your hunger is more comfortable, even pleasant, versus the ravenous, extreme hunger of when you are a "one" or "two".

Consider stopping when you get to a "six" or "seven" — satisfied, but not uncomfortably full. This is where you pause to tune into your body's signals to stop eating, before the uncomfortable kind of fullness kicks in — that sense of having eaten too much.

We've all had those moments of feeling that we're full, but then we keep eating until we are uncomfortably full. **Before you get to that point, try taking an action that reinforces this decision.** For example, you might put your napkin or silverware on your plate, or push the plate away from you, or if in a restaurant, ask a waitperson to wrap leftovers.

If you eat when you are at a "one" or a "two", try to consume something balanced that contains all macronutrients (carbs, protein, fats) and fiber. **If you feel famished and need a quick bite to get by, try one of the following:**

✳A slice of whole grain bread (complex carbohydrate, some fiber) with peanut butter (healthy fat and provides a little protein). (Optional: pair with fruit — such as a pear, a handful of berries, etc. — for more fiber)

✳A piece of fruit (fiber, carbs) and a handful of nuts and/or seeds (healthy fat and protein)

✳Unsweetened yogurt (protein and fat) with a handful of berries (fiber and carbohydrates)

✳A piece of fruit such as an apple (fiber, carbohydrates) with peanut butter or other nut or seed butter (protein, fat)

✳Vegetables of choice (fiber) with hummus (fat, protein, and carbs)

Typically, if we eat when ravenous, we tend to eat very quickly, which makes it difficult to become attuned to our satiety level. **To slow down, try serving yourself a smaller portion as a way for you to check in with your fullness and satiety signals before serving yourself more food.** You can also try eating with your non-dominant hand.

If you do wait to eat until you are ravenous, and then overeat (sometimes because you are eating too quickly for satiety signals to set in), try not to judge yourself for doing so. We've all been there!

Instead, see what you can learn from the experience. Think about what may have happened that day that led you to the point of getting so hungry that you overate: Did you forget to bring healthy snacks to work? Were you intentionally trying to skip a meal? Was your day filled with so much stress and chaos that by the time you checked in with your hunger it was too late? **By paying attention to what led to a particular undesirable eating behavior, you can learn to make a different choice in the future.**

Also, it helps to pay attention to how your body reacts for the remainder of the day after you overeat. Sometimes, if we eat more than we need at a meal, our hunger signals change for the rest of the day. For example, if you had a larger-than-normal lunch, you may feel less hungry for dinner and find yourself satisfied by a light supper. The body is wise and knows how to self-regulate if we just listen to it!

But "listening to our body" is complicated by the fact that the reasons we eat are not simply biological. We might eat because we're stressed, excited, happy, or bored. While it's normal to eat for reasons other than hunger, this behavior can frustrate our attempt to gain control over our eating, for a few reasons:

✳ When eating for reasons other than hunger, we often engage in distracted eating: in front of the TV, at work while immersed in a project, on the phone, or while reading. **When we are distracted while eating, and not fully present for our eating experience, it becomes difficult to tune into our hunger and fullness levels,** and recognize how satiated we feel. Distraction also makes us lose touch with how particular foods make us feel: Bloated? Sluggish? Satisfied?

✳ **When eating, it's common that the best-tasting, most flavorful, most pronounced bites are the first ones we take.** As we continue eating, the flavors start to dull a little. When we participate in distracted eating, it becomes difficult to notice when the taste of foods diminish. So if we're eating while watching TV, we fail to notice that the fifteenth bite doesn't taste quite as yummy as the first one — because we are not paying attention.

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If, on the other hand, we are tuned into taste sensations, we might not eat that fifteenth bite, since our enjoyment has diminished. It's often true that **when we are paying attention to our food, we tend to eat less of it**, because we're more attuned to our body's signals.

Some of us feel compelled to join the "Clean Plate Club". This describes the compulsion to eat everything on our plate so as not to waste food, irrespective of how hungry we actually feel. **Remember that you are not obligated to finish everything on your plate just because it's there.**

I want to be clear that while food waste is a real issue in this country and elsewhere, **we must start to challenge this belief that the only way to not waste food is to eat it all.** Eating more than we need on a biological level is in itself a form of waste, and can harm our health. Your body won't be using that extra food as energy. Some alternatives include composting your extra food, or sharing it with others. Try freezing leftovers for later use. Check out this article for other useful tips on tackling food waste.

The Satisfaction Factor: Reconnecting to The Pleasure of Eating

Sadly, in many affluent countries, food is often seen as the enemy. That attitude is influenced by the media and the diet industry, which promote food fear and an unhealthy body image. Our predominant emotions around food become guilt, preoccupation, and shame. We don't take time to honor the pleasure, satisfaction, and delight that can come from our meals. We all deserve to enjoy these simple pleasures of existence.

If you find yourself feeling like something's missing even when you feel comfortably full, you may want to consider what I call "the satisfaction factor". Pleasure in eating results in greater satisfaction with our food. **The goal should be to make all activities pertaining to food and eating pleasurable.** Allowing yourself to feel satisfied can actually decrease your food cravings later on. It can also help with portion control.

But how do we become more satisfied?

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How to Regain Pleasure in Eating: Step-by-Step

Here is a step-by-step guide (adapted from a book titled *Intuitive Eating*, by Tribole and Resch) on how to regain pleasure in eating again.

1

Step one: ask yourself what you really want to eat.

＊ Once you decide what you are going to eat, honor that desire without distracting thoughts such as how you're going to burn it off later or how many calories it has. (Mindful eating techniques, discussed below, will give you tools for how to do this.)

＊ If you typically have a difficult time controlling your intake of this food (also known as a "fear food"), it is best to consume it when you are a 3-4 on the hunger/fullness scale, versus a 1-2. If this is a snack food, make sure you have eaten something beforehand and are around a 4-5 on the hunger/fullness scale.

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You may be asking yourself: But what if what I really want to eat is pizza and cookies? While it's important not to forbid yourself foods that you really want — since this can lead to overeating, as you've learned in this e-book — it's equally as important to stay attuned to your body's signals when eating. If you eat just because something tastes good without paying attention to fullness signals or how it makes your body feel, this may actually not be such a satisfying experience overall. **It doesn't matter how good a food tastes if you feel lousy after eating it. When you think about eating well as a form of self-care, you will start to desire a variety of nutritious foods, with small amounts of "fun foods" sprinkled in on occasion.**

2

Step two: discover the pleasure of the palate.

✳ *Be sure that what you're eating is pleasurable.* Try experimenting with different foods and spices to find new tastes you might enjoy.

✳ *Introduce variety to your meals.* Remember that different cooking styles can greatly affect the taste of food, so that's a good area for experimentation as well.

✳ *Another helpful practice is to chew slowly.* This not only aids digestion and the chance to feel satiety, but you can savor flavors best that way.

I find it sad when one of my clients comes to me and says "I am eating this food because I heard it was good for me, but I really am not enjoying it, so I just force it down." That's no way to live! As you are eating, be sure to check in, not just with your fullness level, but with your degree of satisfaction — does it taste good? If not, consider not eating any more of that food.

3

Step three: make your eating experience more enjoyable.

* *Try to prepare meals that appeal to the senses.* Ideally, your meals should look good, taste good, and smell good. There's nothing less satisfying than when something is served to you and it looks like mush or doesn't have a pleasing aroma.

* *Consider eating with others.* This can make the experience more enjoyable and is also good for your health. Research supports that sharing meals with others can help you meet your nutritional needs and may lead to increased happiness. Studies support that increased social interaction can lead to lower risk for death. No matter what, be sure to avoid tension at the table. Bickering or arguing can ruin the taste of any meal!

* *Try experimenting with nutritious foods.* For example, plain kale (which is anti-inflammatory and very nutritious) might not sound so appealing to you. But what about kale sautéed in a pan with crispy garlic and olive oil, and drizzled with fresh lemon juice just before serving? Satisfaction and pleasure are vital components of sustainable, healthy eating.

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Mindful Eating

Many of the tools I have introduced you to are facets of what we call "mindful eating". In simplest terms, mindful eating is the act of increasing our consciousness during meal time and being fully present while we're consuming food. This awareness allows us to tune into our hunger and fullness levels, and to gain the kind of satisfaction from food I discussed earlier. The literature shows that mindful eating can help with portion control, digestion, and satisfaction. It can also help with blood sugar, inflammation, and other aspects of health.

Using mindful eating techniques, I have been able to help many clients conquer their fear of certain foods. When a client tells me they are engaging in food restriction (say, of carbs) because of fear they will lose self-control when they eat this food, I work with them on introducing small amounts of these foods as a kind of "exposure therapy."

For example, I had one client who was very fearful of being around cheese because she felt like she would wolf it down without restraint. When she began allowing herself to have cheese, and to be more present while she was eating, she noticed that each time she ate it, she felt bloated shortly afterward, and it aggravated her acne.

Noting her physical reaction, my client decided that the cons of eating cheese outweighed any enjoyment she got from it, and she lost her desire for it. One of my clients actually found that when he ate his "fear food" mindfully, without distractions, he realized he didn't much like the taste of it after all.

When we tune into the eating experience, we start to find the foods that we actually truly enjoy, and that make us feel good afterward. After eating, ask yourself how the food is "sitting" — do you feel good? Do you feel sluggish and/or have poor digestion? How is your energy and focus? We all live busy lives, which makes it especially difficult to eat mindfully. **So even if you bring mindful eating practices to one meal a week, or one meal a day — whatever is realistic for you — that will help you form healthy and pleasurable eating habits.**

Mindful eating:
A few practical tips

1 **If you find yourself feeling out of control around certain foods and have difficulty stopping eating until you're uncomfortably full, consider serving yourself a smaller amount of food.** This can provide a useful check-in point to assess your hunger, fullness, and satisfaction signals. If you're still hungry, you can always go back for more. It's important to not restrict yourself if you truly want more. However, you may find that by eating more mindfully and paying attention to your internal cues, a smaller amount may satisfy you.

For example, if you are worried you're going to overeat a food such as chips, consider putting a smaller amount of chips in a cup or napkin, versus eating out of the family-size bag. Before going back for more, consider rating yourself on the 1-10 hunger/fullness scale and notice what comes up for you, without judgment.

2

Although you may eat without distractions (i.e. not in front of the TV, computer, while working, on your phone, reading, etc.), you may find yourself distracted with thoughts that come up during the eating experience. **Think about where your mind goes as you eat.** Are you ruminating on a conversation that didn't go well at work? Are you comparing your meal to your partner's meal? Are you worrying about a work-related deadline coming up, or how you may look in a bathing suit at the beach? **Distracting thoughts can rob you of the pleasure and satisfaction of the eating experience, and can contribute to mindless eating if left unchecked.**

Here is a process you can use to cope with distracting thoughts while eating:

✳ Select a **sensory focal point** of the food before you begin eating. This might be the taste, or mouthfeel, or sound of the food as you chew it. Come back to it as you notice distracting thoughts arise.

✳ As thoughts arise, create awareness around where your mind goes during the meal and **simply label the thoughts as "thinking"**, without judgment. **Then come back to your sensory focal point** (i.e. sight, smell, touch/texture, sound, taste, mouthfeel). Be prepared to repeat this step frequently throughout the meal.

Keep in mind that this process is not about wishing away or resisting thoughts that will arise during the eating experience. You are practicing mindful eating successfully if you simply notice your distracted thoughts and come back to the sensory focal point, no matter how many times distracted thoughts may arise! This is about practice, not perfection.

3

Consider engaging in a regular mindfulness practice.
Mindful eating is very similar to mindful meditation. Both involve a process of noticing our thoughts, and gently bringing our attention back to the focus of the meditation. In mindful eating, we focus on the sensory experience of the food; in mindful meditation, practitioners often use the breath, ambient sounds, a mantra, a visualization and so forth. **Practicing mindfulness in other parts of your life will make it easier to be more mindful while eating.**

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4 **Be sure to continue to check-in with the taste of your food as you eat it.** The pleasantness of a food can influence our food choices and influence how much we eat. Research supports that we can become temporarily desensitized to specific tastes **within two minutes of eating!**

By stopping eating when we're satisfied, we will walk away from a snack or meal feeling physically comfortable and content, versus overly full and uncomfortable.

5 **Many of us use food to cope with emotions.** Food can be a ready way to comfort, nurture, numb, or distract from difficult issues. This can feel good in the moment, but make us feel bad in the long term. While emotional eating is normal, I often recommend to clients that if it feels destructive, they **consider meeting with a therapist** to learn healthier ways to cope. **After all, emotional eating does not directly address the underlying issues, which can then remain unresolved.**

Mindful eating incorporates much of what I have recommended in this e-book to help you gain control over out-of-control eating.

Here is a step-by-step guide to eating mindfully:

1. **Select a time to eat your meal or snack when you won't be distracted.** Be sure you have adequate time to eat so that you are not rushed. Consider turning off the ringer on your phone and other devices.

2. Consider taking **a couple of deep breaths** before you start eating.

3. Take note of your initial hunger level. On the 1-10 hunger/fullness scale, **rate your hunger level** before you start eating.

4. Before taking your first bite, **notice the visual appeal of the food.** Observe the color, shape, and anything else that stands out to you.

5. **Take in the aroma of the food.** What does the food smell like? Perhaps hints of vanilla, chocolate, citrus, or spice? Is the scent subtle or strong? Just notice.

6. As you start to enjoy your first bites of food, **notice the textures**, **mouthfeel, and sound of the food as you take a bite and chew.** Is it smooth? Rough? Sharp? Soft? Crumbly? Sticky? Moist? As you chew it, is it crunchy? Dull? Slurpy? Just notice; there's no right or wrong.

7. Consider how the food tastes as you eat it, and how the taste may change from the first bite compared to the third or fourth. Is it more or less sweet, sour, bland, salty?

8. As you continue eating this food, be sure to continue to check-in with your hunger and fullness levels periodically throughout the eating experience. Consider stopping eating when you are a #6-7 on the hunger/fullness scale.

9. When you decide you've had enough to eat, consider taking action to reinforce this decision you've made. As I mentioned earlier, examples of this would be putting your napkin or cutlery on the plate; pushing the dish away; storing the food as leftovers. Find something that works best for you to reinforce the decision you've made to stop eating.

Food and You: Summary of Key Tips

✳ Start eating when you reach a three or four on the hunger/fullness scale. Try to stop eating when you reach a six or a seven.

✳ If you need a quick snack when famished, try vegetables and hummus, or an apple with nut butter. Ideally this kind of snack will only be used to tide you over until you can enjoy a balanced meal complete with healthy carbs, proteins, and fats.

✳ Do your best to check in with your satiety level at different points during the meal.

✳ If you overeat, try to learn from the experience, so you can develop strategies to avoid doing so in the future.

✳ Try to avoid eating when distracted (watching TV, talking on the phone, etc.)

✳ Don't feel the need to join "the Clean Plate Club".

✳ Try to connect with the pleasure of eating: experiment with different foods and cooking styles; prepare meals that appeal to the senses; eat with others; chew slowly.

✳ Use mindful eating practices when you can. Review pages 39-41 for a step-by-step guide.

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The Anticancer Lifestyle Program has a free video on mindful eating that guides you through a mindful eating activity. It's really useful. Click this link, or go to the Anticancer Lifestyle Program website, click on the Anticancer Toolkit, and type in "mindful eating".

I'll conclude with this quote from Dr. Jan Chozen Bays: *"Mindful eating replaces self-criticism with self-nurturing. It replaces shame with respect for your own inner wisdom."* In this way, conscious eating can be a big step toward conscious living. **I wish you many *truly* happy meals ahead!**

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To sign up for our free course, please visit the Anticancer Lifestyle Program website.
www.anticancerlifestyle.org

The Anticancer Lifestyle Online Course is a free, expert-led program that helps you make healthy and informed lifestyle choices to reduce your risk of cancer, cancer recurrence, and chronic illness. Our self-paced course is filled with evidence-based tools, tips, and information to promote well-being in the areas of Diet, Fitness, Mindset, and Environment.

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