



# Mindful eating for the Holidays

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**The holidays are right around the corner and that means food, and lots of it! Do you ever feel overstuffed or guilty after eating your holiday meal? If so, practicing mindful eating may benefit you. Implementing mindful eating can mean the difference between post-meal satisfaction or post-meal regret.**

## What is mindful eating?

Mindful eating is paying attention to what it is a combination of many actions that create an enjoyable eating experience. This involves using several of your senses, including smell, touch, taste, and sight. With mindful eating, you can still eat your favorite foods without overeating.

## How do I eat mindfully?

- **Eat slowly:** Eating slowly is one of the most important steps. It takes about 20 minutes to feel full. For example; if you eat 5 slices of cake in 10 minutes, you won't feel fullness for another 5 minutes. Conversely, if you savor 1 slice in 20 minutes, you'll still enjoy the flavor of the cake and feel satisfied, all without the guilt.
- **Understand the Law of Diminishing Returns:** Try chewing your food slowly, and feel every texture and flavor of a single bite. There are more flavors in a slow and deliberate bite as opposed to 10 quick bites. Remember; go for quality, not quantity.
- **Avoid distractions:** How much food do you eat when you're not paying attention to the food itself? Try turning off the TV and focus on your food instead.
- **Pause and feel:** Take a short break while eating. Ask yourself: How full am I? Am I still hungry? Am I eating because I'm bored? Try to familiarize yourself with the feeling of fullness and stop eating at the first sign of fullness.

## Holiday mindful eating.

- **Eyeing that homemade pumpkin pie at the dinner table?** Have some! Serve yourself a small portion, perhaps a few forkfuls, and eat it mindfully. Chew slowly, smell it, and appreciate every bite. After you're done, pause for a few minutes. A second serving will not taste as good as the first one.
- **Try these healthy holiday food ideas at your next party or potluck:** Vegetable platters, oven roasted turkey, baked beans, cauliflower mashed potatoes, and hummus with pita chips.
- **Need sweet alternatives?** Prepare a colorful fruit salad, crust less pies, whole grain cookies, greek yogurt with fruit, or even low-calorie ice cream to satisfy your holiday sweet tooth.

For personalized nutrition counseling, call (626) 397-5600, extension 6, to make an appointment with our registered dietitian. Visit our website at [www.huntingtonhospital.org/nutritioncounseling](http://www.huntingtonhospital.org/nutritioncounseling) for more information.