

Summary of Session Two of Eating for Your Health

Why Diets Don't Work

More than 90% of people who lose weight on a diet will have regained it back within two to five years, and often with extra. The dieting cycle can do a tremendous amount of psychological damage along the way. Unfortunately there is a big fixation on weight in the medical world, but people of all shapes and sizes suffer from the same health issues - people living in smaller bodies also develop type 2 diabetes, have heart disease, develop cancer, have sore knees, breathing issues, etc. Genetics plays a big part and as Dietitians we prefer to focus on family history, blood tests and lifestyle factors as more important indicators than weight and shape. You can make changes and improve your health and wellbeing without necessarily losing weight. Focusing on weight and the numbers on the scale reinforces society's tendency to judge a book by its cover. This can lead to negative self-talk and reduced self-esteem and confidence.

Mindful Eating

When we eat, we are often not really present or truly appreciating the food. We may be in a hurry, distracted, or stressed etc. The idea behind mindful eating is to slow down the eating process and create awareness of what it is like to use all of your senses when you eat. Satisfaction can change over the course of eating too. Usually the first mouthful of something is the most satisfying as it is stimulating all of your senses for the first time. Satisfaction decreases the more we are exposed to the same thing. Combining mindful eating and awareness of changing satisfaction levels helps to get more in tune with what your body likes and wants.

Buzz Foods

These are foods that buzz around in your head like an irritating fly. They are usually foods you have forbidden yourself from eating. You resist and resist until finally you eat the food, and then often you feel bad about doing so. But remember, all food is just food, no good or bad ones, just food. If these buzz foods are eaten slowly and mindfully, you may find they are not as great as anticipated, or that you are satisfied sooner with a smaller amount of it, or that even though you aren't necessarily hungry you know you are eating it for pleasure and are able to enjoy and savour it.

When Things Don't Go to Plan

Even with the best of intentions and the most careful planning, sometimes life just gets in the way. We need to juggle so many things every day and all of these can impact the food we have available and the choices we make. It is important to remember that we are only human and no one eats perfectly (whatever that is) 100% of the time. If you "get off track" don't tell yourself off or let unhelpful thoughts make you feel bad. The important thing is to learn from these experiences so you can work to prevent the same thing happening again.

Homework

1. Have a go at some mindful eating, even just the odd mindful bite sometimes. This will help you increase your awareness. Use the "Mindful Eating and Satisfaction" document to help guide you. The more you do it, the more it will become second nature for you.
2. There is also the blank "Behaviour Chain" sheet to have a go filling out. Try and see where the chain could be broken and how you could do this.

Next time

We will be talking about:

- Accepting and embracing body shape and size diversity
- Looking after all areas of your health
- Psychological health
- Movement for the joy of it