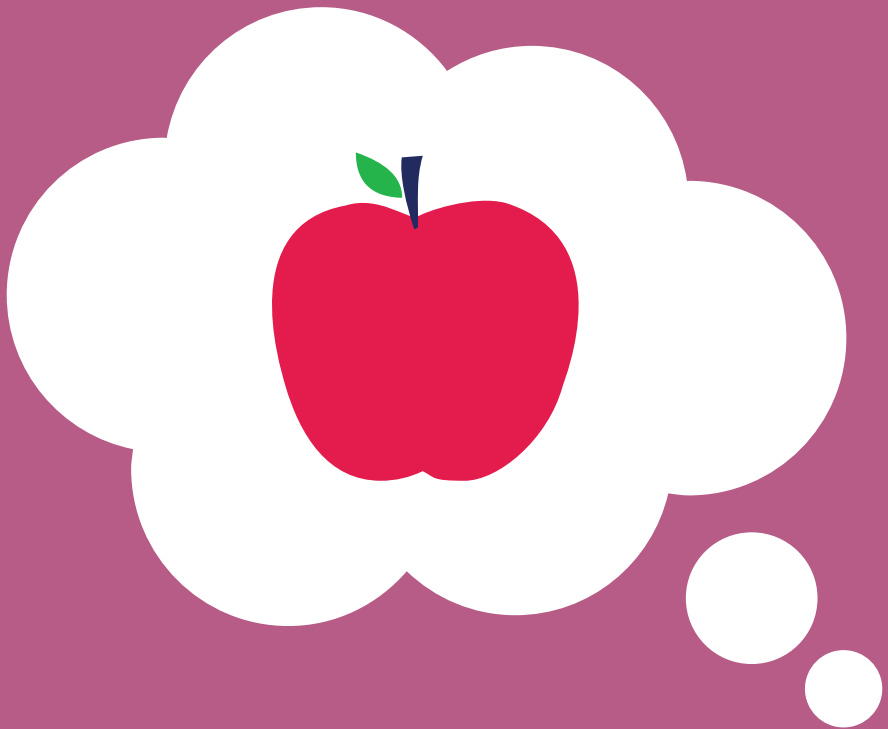# Live Life BETTER DERBYSHIRE

Mindful Eating

Mindful Eating

If your meal times are often squeezed in between tasks or eaten in front of the TV, you could be missing out on the full enjoyment of your food and end up eating more as a result. By learning to eat mindfully you can begin to really savour and appreciate the joy of eating, and also learn to eat less in the process, helping you to lose weight more easily and quickly.

What is mindful eating?

Mindful eating means being fully aware of what you're eating and how you're eating it. It's a simple idea which should help you to think more carefully about what you choose to eat and how to notice the thoughts, sensations and feelings that take place while you're eating.

Fast food, eating on the go and the many distractions of modern life have led to lots of us becoming out of touch with our hunger and 'mindlessly' eating foods that leave us feeling unsatisfied.

We will often eat more than we really need which in turn leads many people to gain weight. Mindful eating is an opportunity for you to recognise and change these behaviours by learning to regain control over how you feel and eat, and to enjoy and feel satisfied with the food you choose.

Mindfulness for beginners

Once you've got into the habit of mindful eating it's simple, but like anything it can take a little practice at the beginning.

For your first attempt you might want to eat alone, without any distractions and choose a food that you really enjoy. Eat your food very slowly and while you're enjoying it pay attention to all aspects of the experience.
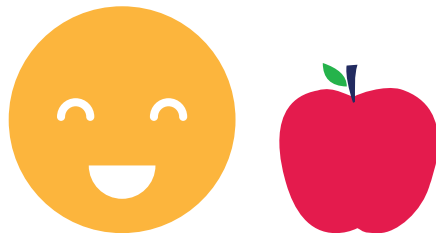
Before you put your food into your mouth and while you're eating think about…

How does the food look?
Shape / Colour / Shade

How does it smell?
What sort of aromas can you pick up?

How does it feel?
In your hand / Through your knife and fork / In your mouth – is it hard, soft, rough, smooth, crunchy, melting?

How does it taste?
Sweet, sour, bitter, salty, tangy?

How does it sound?
This might feel a little strange at first but will help you to really appreciate the entire eating experience.

How does it feel in your body?
Physical sensations / Emotions / Hunger / Satisfaction

And, for the rest of the time you're eating…

Remember to notice the feelings in your body, the sensation of the food moving through your digestive system into your stomach and the feeling of fullness that you begin to experience the more you eat.
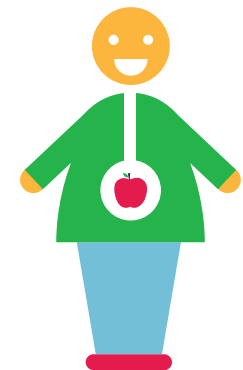
Mindful Tips

Slow down when eating

Take time to pause while you're eating by putting your cutlery down between bites. Making sure you chew thoroughly will also help you to feel full before you have overeaten, which will help you to eat less over time.

Remember to avoid distractions

Such as TV, eating on the go, or eating while working so that you can really enjoy your food in the moment.

Use all of your five senses

Sight, touch, smell, taste, and sound to fully appreciate the experience of eating.

Listen to your body

Take note of how you feel when you are really hungry and also when you're full, even if you still have some food left on your plate. Use the *Hunger Scale* resource to help you with this.

Learn to be in tune with your thoughts and feelings

Recognise when you are eating for reasons other than hunger. Use everything that you've learnt on your weight loss journey to use an alternative route to dealing with your feelings, rather than reaching for food. You can use the *Changing Patterns* leaflet to learn more about this.

Practising Mindful Eating

Making time to put your mindful technique into practice is really important to start off with. Make a note here of three times this week when you are going to eat more mindfully and make sure you plan them into your schedule.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____