

Food for Thought



What is mindful eating?

- Allowing yourself to become aware of the positive and nurturing opportunities that are available through food preparation and consumption by respecting your own inner wisdom.
- Choosing to eat food that is both pleasing to you and nourishing to your body by using all your senses to explore, savor, and taste.
- Learning to be aware of physical hunger and satiety cues to guide your decision to begin eating and to stop eating.
- Acknowledging responses to food (likes, neutral or dislikes) without judgment.

Free Handout for Individuals from The Center for Mindful Eating

Keeping Our Bodies In Balance

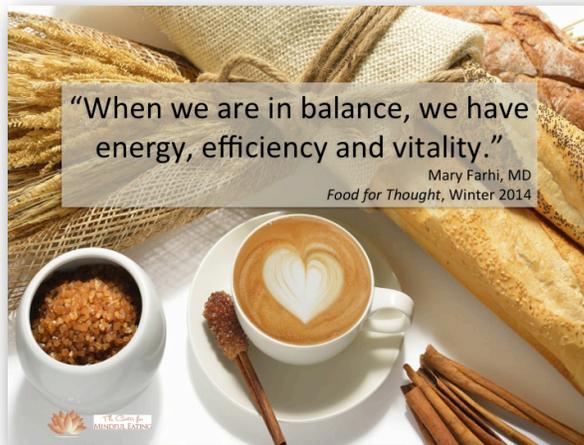
By Mary Farhi, MD

A system in balance runs efficiently and effectively. Think of tuning up your car and changing the oil, which results in improved gas mileage. Our bodies are no different. When we are in balance we have energy, efficiency and vitality. When we are out of balance we have “dis-ease” and inefficiency. Let’s consider Type 2 diabetes as an example. Once an individual has a certain lab value criterion we then name it Type 2 diabetes and develop a treatment plan. But Type 2 diabetes does not just happen.

We will show signs of insulin resistance, which is an example of a system out of balance. Are we paying attention when our bodies try to communicate?

There are many signs and symptoms of a system that is overworked and out of balance. Yet we might not pay attention to those signs. Think of an overheated engine. We would see the temperature gauge go up, perhaps even see some smoke.

Well, often our bodies are overheated and sending us “smoke signals.” These may be signs of insulin resistance and may include irregular menstrual cycles in a woman who has polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), fatigue, difficulty losing weight or hot flashes and night sweats. These are just a few examples of our body’s communication that we are out of balance.



So how do we back up or reverse the progression of insulin resistance to Type 2 diabetes? This is where mindfulness and mindful eating come in. Pay attention to how we feel physically and emotionally on a daily basis as well as while we are eating and after eating. Do we feel vital and energized? Or do we feel as though we are in a “food coma” and need to

lie down after eating? We need to listen to our engine, our body. Are we using high octane gas that makes the engine run smoothly or cheap gas that makes our engine knock? Be mindful while we eat as well as afterward of how we feel mentally AND physically.

So what can we do? One way to begin to dialogue with ourselves is to keep a food diary and include not only what we eat but also why we eat. Record how we feel before and after eating, both physically and emotionally.

Perhaps we can begin to shift our focus from treating “dis-ease” to creating wellness and vitality from within. Change the oil and rotate the tires on a regular basis. Be in the moment and listen to our body and be mindful of how we are supporting our body, both physically and emotionally. There is no ONE perfect diet for everyone. Yet each person can begin to dialogue and listen to what best supports her individual body and encourages resiliency, vitality and wellness. Let food be thy medicine.

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