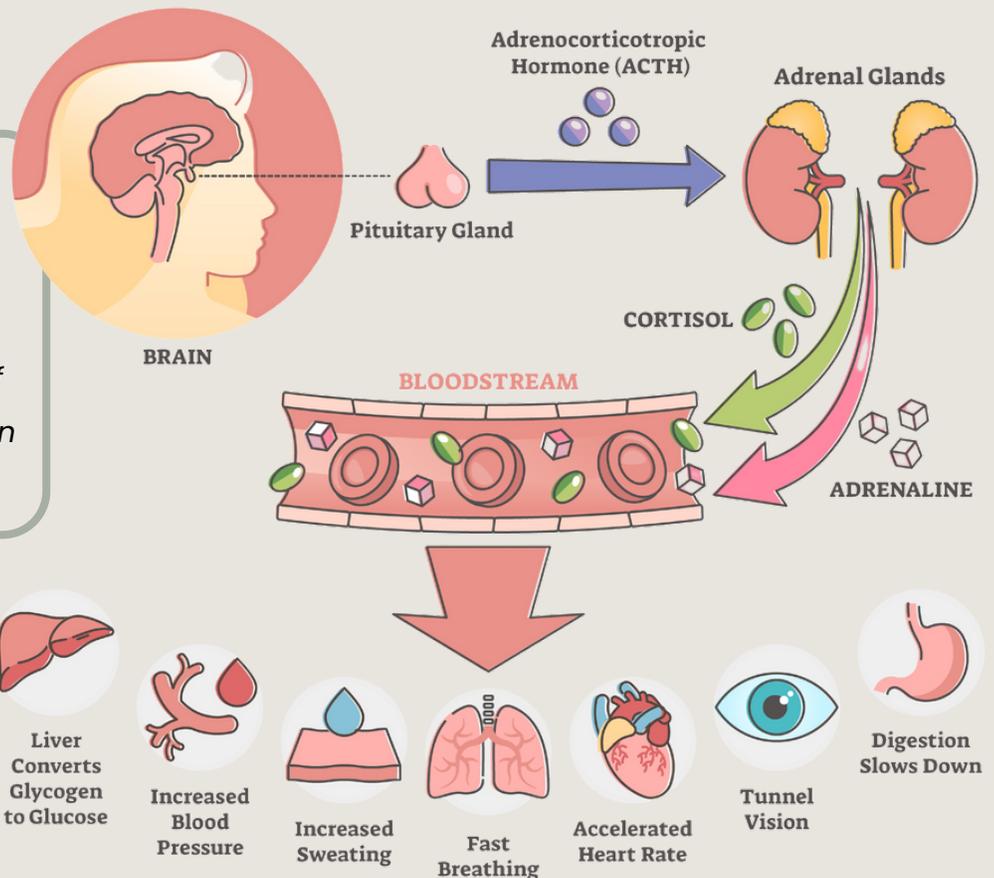


Impact of stress and weight

- The Stress Response is the way the body protects itself
- However, relentless stress on our bodies causes harm



Stress Response:

1. Starts in the brain (amygdala) with **perceived danger** (example: being chased by a bear)
2. Sends **signal** to the hypothalamus
3. Hypothalamus activates the **sympathetic nervous system (SNS)**
4. SNS sends a signal to the adrenal glands which **releases adrenaline and epinephrine**
5. Adrenaline and Epinephrine **increase blood pressure, heart rate, dilation of lung bronchioles to increase oxygen intake**, fight or flight (run)
6. Hypothalamus then activates HPA axis which causes more reaction and stimulates **cortisol release** into the bloodstream.
 - Cortisol functions: can **increase appetite** with prolonged stress and also stimulates the body to **release nutrition** into the bloodstream (glucose and fatty acids) so it has the energy to **“fight or flight (run)”**
7. **Pupils dilate** (tunnel vision) and digestion slows (bloated, gassy, reflux, stomach pain)

How do you Mind the Mind and “conclude” the cycle of being “stressed”

1. Being more intentional

- Breathing techniques (a way to convince the brain you are safe). Breathing “calms” the vagus nerve, reduces heart rate and blood pressure.
- Meditation

2. Physical activity

- Physical activity with intention of weight loss is “stressful to the brain” as you generally are not enjoying the activity. Find opportunities for joyful, enjoyable and fun movement.

3. Laughing

- Comedies, funny youtube videos, connection with others

4. Positive social interactions

- Complimenting someone or yourself, saying “hello” to someone; having an enjoyable conversation, having family dinners or just eating with others; gratitude statements; avoiding isolation

5. Finding creative outlets

- Crocheting, drawing, painting, paint by numbers, coloring books

6. Crying

- Watching a “feel good” movie, read cards that are poignant

7. Physical affection (hugging)

- Get a good deep hug, stroking an animal

8. Mindfulness (in general)

“If you are feeling depressed, you are living in the past; if you are anxious you are living in the future; if you are at peace you are living in the present.” Lau Tzu



Ways to help you “get back” to the present moment:

Using Grounding exercises:

- 5-4-3-2-1 technique
- The Sound of Music technique: what are your favorite things? Imagination brings soothing and calmness
- Box Breathing

9. Mindful eating practices

- Not multitasking; not eating in the car; not eating distracted; standing while eating; scrolling on your phone while eating
- Raisin or chocolate exercise (**worksheet attached**)
- Asking questions before eating
- Pausing while eating (putting fork down ½ way through) or putting fork down between bites
- Hunger/fullness Scale (**worksheet attached**)



It takes 20 minutes for your brain to know you are full and have had “enough” to eat.

10. Practicing gratitude

- Prayer, thankfulness for food or connection; plating on nice service ware; setting your table nicely (flowers, place mat)
- Dieting drives stress in the body, mindfulness and connection to food brings calmness, confidence in eating, and reduces chaos in the brain.



Reflect:

1. On a scale of 1 to 10. How would you rate your daily stress level (1 very low, 10 extremely high)

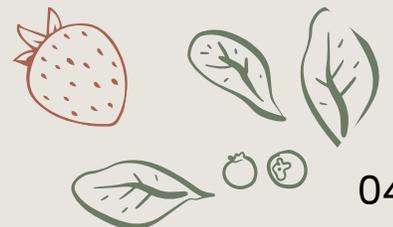


2. How long does a typical meal take you to eat?

3. How often do you have a meal with others vs in isolation?

4. When is the last time you had a “good” laugh or cry?

5. How do you view physical activity currently? Positively, negatively? Describe:



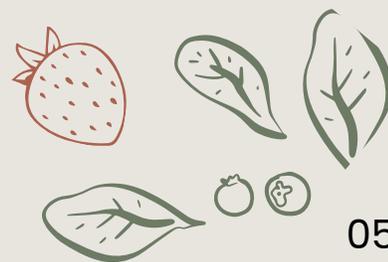
Example:

1. Time your meals for a week. How long does it take you to eat?

- Attempt to have a day where it takes you 15-20 minutes for breakfast and 30-45 minutes for lunch and dinner.
- **What do you notice?**

2. Using the hunger and fullness scale (pdf attached), rate your level of hunger before the start of a meal and level of fullness after a meal for 5 meals this week.

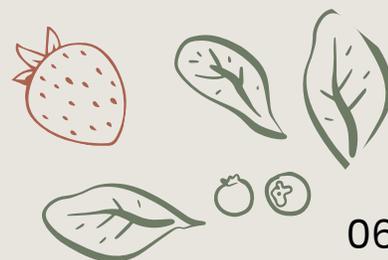
- **What do you notice?**



Feeding Goals:

Movement Goals:

Questions for my Dietitian:



Mindful Eating Practice



Arriving at food means that you become aware before a meal/snack comes into your personal space. This process helps you transition from life's distractions, and become more mindful before the meal begins.

Prior to eating, take 30 sec. to consider the following in silence:

- Take a close look at the food, notice colors and textures.
- Name all of the foods you see.
- Bring your face close to the food, and pick out all of the odors and aromas that you sense from the food.
- Imagine yourself eating the food, intently and on purpose.



Awakening to food means that we pay attention to every aspect of the food. During your meal, pay particular attention to how fast you are eating. We want to invite you to slow down your eating so that you extend your meal past the digestion point and determine how full you really are.

During your eating experience:

- Insert pauses in your meal by putting down silverware and remaining food.
- Concentrate on the taste of the food and the act of eating.
- Keep chewing until the food is uniformly smooth.
- After you swallow but before you take your next bite, rest for a few seconds.



Afterwards Once you are finished eating, be mindful of the other activities that surround food and eating. Putting away the dishes and food as well as cleaning up are opportunities to be attentive.

Take 5-10 minutes in silence to journalize the following:

- Notice how you are feeling physically. Rate your fullness, and compare it to how you felt before you started eating.
- Notice any thoughts you have about the food.
 - Are you having guilt or anger about how much you ate? Do you have an urge to eat more?
- Notice how satisfied you feel.
 - What did you enjoy about the food? What challenges/ discomfort did you face?
- Express gratitude for the meal, and the people you shared it with.

Mindful Eating Exercise Chocolate Meditation

Here's How:

For the chocolate meditation, you need, of course, a piece of chocolate. It need not be a large piece of chocolate, either; in fact, bite-sized or a little larger is best.

Next, take a few deep breaths to relax your body. You want to start your chocolate meditation as physically relaxed as possible. Close your eyes, if you feel comfortable with it.

Finally, take a small bite of your chocolate. Do not chew. **Let it sit on your tongue and melt in your mouth.** Notice the flavors from the chocolate, becoming completely absorbed in what you're experiencing *right now*. Continue your deep breathing, and concentrate on the sensations in your mouth.

As you swallow, focus on how it feels going down. Notice how your mouth feels empty. Then, as you take a second bite, try to even notice how your arm feels as you raise the chocolate to your mouth, how it feels between your fingers, and then in your mouth. Again, focus on the sensations you are feeling in the present moment.

If other thoughts come into your mind during your chocolate meditation, gently refocus your attention to the flavors and sensations associated with the chocolate. The idea is to stay in the present moment as much as you possibly can.

Savor this feeling. When you're done savoring your chocolate, revisit the feeling throughout your day, and feel more relaxed. You may choose to continue your meditation after the chocolate is gone, or simply resume your day immediately afterward.

Tips:

You don't need to consume large quantities of chocolate during this exercise. In fact, if you're doing it carefully, you won't need to consume much at all.

If you're sensitive to chocolate or have issues with sugar, you can try a similar type of meditation with raisins or other savor-able food you're able to safely eat.

Hunger/Fullness Scale

| | |
|----|--|
| 10 | Binge Fullness: Sick with stomach and back pain |
| 9 | “Thanksgiving Fullness” |
| 8 | “Uncomfortable Fullness that comes along with eating more than usual” |
| 7 | Fullness that allows you to leave the table without looking back |
| 6 | Comfortable feeling that results in satisfied feeling within 1/2 hour |
| 5 | Neutral |
| 4 | Your senses indicate you are hungry. Food starts looking good and tastes good. You may not know you are hungry until you taste the food. |
| 3 | Stomach is empty and may growl. Need to eat with 10-15 minutes. |
| 2 | Headache, irritable, tired, weak, light-headed. Preoccupied with food. You may want to order everything and are having a hard time deciding what to eat. |
| 1 | Fasting numbness that is felt when food is no longer craved |