Am I Hungry?®

Mindful Eating for Bariatric Surgery

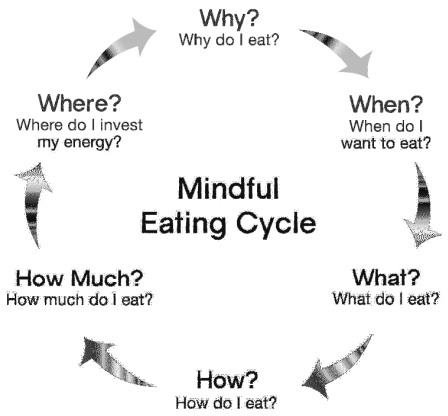
www.AmIHungry.com

It's Not Just What You Eat, But Why

By Michelle May, M.D.

Many people have the mistaken belief that problems with food are caused by what and how much they eat. Those are important but what you eat and how much you eat are strongly affected by *why* you're eating in the first place.

The Am I Hungry?® Mindful Eating Cycle will help you see how each decision you make affects your other decisions.



From *Eat What You Love, Love What You Eat* by Michelle May MD, ©2013.

As you review the Mindful Eating Cycle, ask yourself the following questions to help you recognize, understand, and change your decisions about eating.

Why? Why do I eat?

- Why do I think I eat?
- Am I aware of any situations or emotions that trigger me to want to eat when I'm not hungry? Examples: Mealtimes, social events, certain people, stress, boredom…

When? When do I feel like eating?

- How often do I eat eating?
- Can I tell if I'm hungry?
- How could I redirect my attention away from food until I'm hungry?
- What could I do to cope better with my emotional triggers for eating? Examples: Manage stress better; tell someone how I really feel; find a hobby; treat myself to a hot bath; ask for help around the house…

What? What do I eat?

- What do I eat in a typical day?
- What kind of beverages do I drink?
- Do I drink enough water?
- Would a food diary help me?
- What health issues do I need to be aware of when deciding what to eat? Examples: High blood pressure, high cholesterol, family history of diabetes.
- Do I have dumping syndrome? If so, which foods cause it?
- Which foods do I tolerate best?
- Am I eating enough protein?
- Do I take my supplements as prescribed?
- What foods do I want when I'm eating for emotional reasons? Why?
- Are there any areas of my diet that I could improve right now?
- What specific change would I like to make at this time?

How? How do I eat?

- Do I eat while I'm distracted? Examples: Watching T.V.; reading; driving; working; talking…
- Do I eat fast?
- Do I really taste my food?
- Do I eat differently in private than I do in public?

How Much? How much do I eat?

- How do I typically feel when I'm done eating? Do I like that feeling?
- Do I usually clean my plate?
- If I'm not hungry when I start eating, how do I know when to stop?
- What situations or emotions trigger me to overeat?
- What could I do to address those triggers more effectively? Examples: Order less food, share, ask for a to-go container, get up from the table, turn off the TV, set boundaries with others…

Where? Where do I invest the fuel I eat?

- Am I physically active?
- Do I watch too much TV or spend too much free time in front of computer?
- Do I exercise? What do I like to do?
- What else do I do with my energy? Examples: Play with my children, work on my hobbies, volunteer, travel, spend time with friends…
- Is there anything else I'd like to do with my energy that I'm not doing now? What are my goals for my relationships, my career, and my life?

The first step to changing the way you eat is awareness. As you become more mindful of each decision point in your Mindful Eating Cycle, you'll discover small changes that can make a big difference in why, when, what, how, and how much you eat and where you invest your energy.

Excerpt from the *Am I Hungry? Mindful Eating for Bariatric Surgery Program* by Michelle May, M.D. and Margaret Furtado, M.S., R.D. Available from www.AmIHungry.com

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