



5 Ways to Practice Mindful Eating

The art of mindful eating allows your child to develop a healthy ability to pay better attention to his hunger and fullness cues. This is a valuable skill for kids to learn at a young age, because even as preschoolers they're already developing the eating habits they will take with them into adulthood. Use these five tips to encourage healthy eating habits, to keep your kids engaged during mealtime and to encourage mindful eating.

1 Avoid screens at the table

During meal and snack times, have everyone sit down at the table without any screens (including TV, phones, tablets, etc.) or toys. Distraction-free eating allows kids to learn to enjoy the taste and flavors of their food and to recognize when they are hungry or full. If your child is eating in front of a screen or is busy playing while snacking, she is probably eating quickly too. By eating quickly, she doesn't really taste her food and is more likely to overeat.

If there are other distractions around, such as pets or even a window where she can see kids playing outside, you may want to keep pets in another



room during mealtime or move your child's seat at the table to help eliminate the distraction.

2 Sit down and eat together

There are the kids who never sit down at the table for meal or snack times and then there are the kids who do. In order to get your kids to be the ones who do sit down to eat, you need to make that a priority and a habit. It may be challenging at first, but by consistently reminding your children that "when we eat, we sit down at the table" and making it a practice, they'll eventually realize that's the way things are going to be.

(continued on page 2)

Farmer Fran's Fun Facts



Broccoli

- California is the number one commercial producer of broccoli in the U.S., producing more than 90% of the nation's crop.
- Over 2,000 years ago the son of Roman Emperor Tiberius, loved broccoli so much he refused to eat anything else for an entire month.
- As of 2018, the average person in the U.S. ate almost 6 pounds of fresh broccoli per year.
- Thomas Jefferson, was an avid gardener and experimented with broccoli seeds brought over from Italy in the late 1700s.
- Broccoli belongs to the cabbage family and it is a cool season crop, although it is available year round.
- Broccoli is delicious raw, steamed, stir-fried and roasted. Try adding it fresh or frozen to soups, salads, pastas, omelets and casseroles.
- Look for broccoli with a firm stem and tight, compact, dark green florets.
- Known as the "Crown Jewel of Nutrition" broccoli is rich in vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber. It is an excellent source of vitamin C, K, folate and chromium. There are 34 calories in 100 grams, about 3.5 ounces, of broccoli.

CDPH, justfunfacts.com

5 Ways to Practice Mindful Eating

— Continued from front page

When this becomes a part of your routine, sitting down and eating together as a family is a great way to introduce new foods, since your child is much more likely to eat the same healthy foods you do when he sees you enjoying them. This is also a great opportunity to keep your children engaged with conversation. Ask open-ended questions, such as, “What was the most fun thing you did at school today?” Keeping conversations positive and light at the dinner table will make mealtime more enjoyable for everyone and you might be able to learn something about your child’s day.

3 Teach table manners

Even young children can learn table manners and communicate when they want more food or are finished eating. Don’t be alarmed if your child throws food, burps or makes a huge mess and spills. It’s going to happen, and he’s probably doing it because he thinks it’s funny and/or wants to get a reaction from you. In these instances, calmly and consistently remind kids about good table manners, and encourage them to say “excuse me” and to help clean up their mess.

4 Talk about what they are eating and how their bellies feel

To encourage mindfulness, talk to your children about the foods they are eating. Ask them about what colors they see and what it tastes like. Talk to them about how the healthy foods they are eating can help make them strong, run fast and jump high!

You also want to talk to them about how their bellies feel. When your kids are in tune with how their bellies feel, and if they are eating slowly, they can better recognize their hunger and fullness cues. This helps teach your child the healthy ability to regulate her intake and to avoid overeating. If your little one is excited to get back to playing and is eating faster than you’d like her to, remind her to slow down and listen to her tummy.

5 Avoid eating on the go or in the car

This is probably one of the most difficult mindfulness practices for families today. We’re constantly running from

one practice to the next or from one errand to another, so sometimes eating on the go or in the car simply has to happen. The trick is to try to not make a habit of mindless snacking just because you’re in the car or at the grocery store trying to keep your child quiet and occupied. This practice teaches your child to replace boredom with food and to ignore her hunger and fullness cues.

— Developed by *Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta Strong4Life*. Children’s created *Strong4Life.com*, a free resource to help busy parents raise healthier families.

