



## Tips When Deciding What To Eat

**1. Ask yourself what you really want to eat.** If you have been a dieter, you probably are accustomed to eating what you are told you “should” eat. However, you will gain greater satisfaction when you take the time to figure out what you really want to eat and then give yourself unconditional permission to eat it. When you eat what you are hungry for, you are more likely to feel satisfied without feeling deprived. Questions to assist in determining what you want to eat centre around the following:

- **Physiological necessity** is what your body needs. This will assist to determine portion size or the density of what you are eating. Ask yourself: How hungry am I?
- **Taste** happens in the mouth, primarily on the tongue. The taste buds have 5 kinds of sensors (called receptors) which sense sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and umami (savory). Ask yourself: What taste do I feel like? Sweet, salty, sour, bitter or savory?
- **Mouthfeel** happens in the mouth. Exactly as the name implies, it’s feeling (or touching) with our mouths, just like we feel with our hands, feet, etc. The sensation include temperature, texture, piquancy (or spicyness), and astringency (causing puckering). Ask yourself: What does my mouth feel like? Hot or cold; crunchy or smooth; does my mouth feel like reacting to what I am eating?
- **Aroma** happens in the nose. The “scent” of food travels up through the nasal cavity to the nose. The nose has about 350 kinds of receptors that detect different odorant molecules. Without smell, you only get sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and savory and all the rest of the delicious “chemical” details, are sensed by these receptors. Ask yourself: What does my nose feel like smelling?
- **‘The X Factor’** happens everywhere else. It is our internal state of mind when eating (happy, starving, exhausted), how the dish looks (disgusting, tasty, ridiculous), the people around us, what memories the food inspires, etc. ‘The X Factor’ is simply what you feel like, irrespective of the above. Foods elicit differing activity in the brain. Ask yourself: What experience am I feeling like?

**2. Focus on the actual experience of eating.** Pay attention to the taste, texture, aroma, appearance, and temperature of the different foods you eat. By tuning into the sensual qualities of foods, you will be more likely to choose foods that are most satisfying to you. Otherwise, you’ll end up feeling unsatisfied when you’re finished eating and find yourself on the prowl for something else that will satisfy you.

**3. Make your eating experience more enjoyable.** Make eating a satisfying and pleasurable experience- rather than a battle ground. Employing mindful eating will assist in building and reinforcing connectedness to your appetite.



- **Savour your food:** Take time to sit down and focus on eating slowly. Remember that your taste buds are on your tongue and not in your stomach. Gobbling your food takes away your chance to really taste it.
- **Provide variety:** Eating a variety of foods is not only nutritionally wise, but it will give you a more satisfying eating experience.
- **Eat when you are gently hungry rather than overly hungry:** If you are over hungry, your biological need for energy overrides your ability to eat slowly and savour your food.
- **Eat in a pleasant environment (when possible):** This allows you to focus more on the eating experience and your level of enjoyment generally increases. When you eat in a tense and hurried environment, you tend to eat faster and your satisfaction level decreases.

**4. Check in: does it still taste good?** Routinely check in with yourself to see if food still tastes as good as it did when you started eating. If it doesn't consider stopping, as your satisfaction level is diminishing. When it comes to pleasurable eating, the bottom line is this—If you learn to eat what you really want, in an environment that is inviting, the pleasure derived will be a powerful force in helping you feel satisfied and content. When you make eating a pleasurable experience, you'll find that it takes much less food to decide when you've had "enough" and the overall quality of food you eat generally increases. Healthful eating is more than just the right mix of nutrients and calories. It's about promoting well-being in a way that can't be measured on a blood test and is as important to overall health as the nutrients in the food you eat. Eating should be a pleasurable experience for you. If not, it's time to reclaim your right to pleasurable, satisfying eating. Strive to make eating a pleasurable experience for yourself and those around you.