

INTUITIVE EATING CAN HELP YOU BREAK FREE FROM THE ON-AND-OFF CYCLE OF DIETING AND LEARN TO EAT MINDFULLY WITHOUT GUILT.



EAT & DRINK  
HEALTHY

### Intuitive eating research shows

that helping people recognize and respond to their internal signs of hunger and satiety may offer a healthier alternative to dieting.



Intuitive eaters have been found to show greater unconditional self-regard and body satisfaction (or appreciation) and lower levels of depression and disordered eating behaviors.

### How you eat is just as important as what you eat.

Pause in the middle of eating and ask yourself how the food tastes, and what your current hunger level is. Try putting your fork down between bites to help you focus more on how you feel.



**Did you Know?** *Focusing on weight leads to body dissatisfaction and weight stigma, which negatively impacts health (O'Hara & Taylor, 2018).*



## TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HUNGER

### What is Intuitive Eating?

Ever heard of “intuitive eating”? It’s not a diet. It’s a nutritional approach that focuses on tuning into your body’s natural hunger signals. No food is categorized as “good” or “bad,” and you get to eat what you want, when you want it! Sound good?

### Here are the main principles of intuitive eating:

- Pay attention to your body signals of hunger and fullness.
- Eat when you are hungry.
- Stop eating when you feel physically satisfied.

In today’s fast-paced culture, we tend to overlook our body’s messages regarding what food it wants or needs. We are born with an innate system that lets us know when we are hungry, what type of food we need, and when we are full. However, we have learned to all but ignore these signals as we eat while doing multiple tasks, “finish our plate,” and eat in an attempt to satisfy other needs. The more you practice becoming in tune to your body’s signals, the easier it becomes to resume your body’s natural process. If you eat the correct amount of food, during the correct times, over time you’ll desire the type of food your body needs to thrive.

### Tune into your eating for better health

Ultimately, you are the expert of your body. Only you know what hunger, fullness, and satisfaction feels like. Only you know your thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Intuitive Eating is an empowerment tool that allows you to break from dieting culture and weight obsession.

# TEN PRINCIPLES OF INTUITIVE EATING

1. **Reject the Diet Mentality**—Throw out the diet books and magazine articles that offer you the false hope of losing weight quickly, easily and permanently. Stop believing quick fix plans can deliver lasting results.
2. **Honor Your Hunger**—Learning to honor this first biological signal sets the stage for rebuilding trust in yourself and in food. Respond to early signs of hunger by feeding your body. Letting yourself get too hungry can lead to overeating.
3. **Make Peace with Food**—Call a truce; stop the war with food! Give yourself unconditional permission to eat. If you tell yourself that you can't or shouldn't have a food, it can lead to intense feelings of deprivation that build into uncontrollable cravings and, often, bingeing.
4. **Challenge the Food Police**—Scream a loud “No” to thoughts in your head that declare you're “good” for eating minimal calories or “bad” because you ate a piece of chocolate cake. Food is neither good or bad and you are not good or bad for what you eat or do not eat.
5. **Discover the Satisfaction Factor**—We often overlook one of the most basic gifts of existence—the pleasure and satisfaction that can be found in the eating experience. When you eat what you want, in an environment that is inviting, the pleasure you derive will be a powerful force in helping you feel satisfied and content. To practice, think about what types of eating experiences are most satisfying.
6. **Feel Your Fullness**—Listen for the body signals that tell you that you are no longer hungry. Observe the signs that show that you're comfortably full. Pause in the middle of eating and ask yourself how the food tastes, and how hungry or full you are feeling.
7. **Cope with Your Emotions with Kindness**—Recognize that food restriction, both physically and mentally, can, in and of itself, trigger loss of control, which can feel like emotional eating. Find ways other than food to deal with your feelings, such as walking, meditating, journaling, or reaching out to a friend.
8. **Respect Your Body**—Respect your body so you can feel better about who you are. It's hard to reject the diet mentality if you are unrealistic and overly critical of your body size or shape. Recognize it as capable and beautiful as it is.
9. **Movement: Feel the Difference**—Shift your focus to how it feels to move your body, rather than the calorie-burning effect of exercise. Focus on how you feel from working out — such as energized. It can make the difference between rolling out of bed for a brisk morning walk or hitting the snooze alarm.
10. **Honor Your Health: Gentle Nutrition**—Your overall food patterns are what shapes your health. Gentle Nutrition teaches us that a healthy diet is varied and balanced, and does not exclude certain foods. Make food choices that honor your health and taste buds while making you feel good.



**Looking to get started with Intuitive Eating?** Approach your eating habits while becoming more aware of how and when you eat. Aim to eat when you're hungry but not starving. Stop when you're comfortably full and not stuffed. Without judgment, take stock in your eating behaviors and emotions. Seek additional resources to learn more about eating intuitively.

Source: [Intuitiveeating.org](https://intuitiveeating.org), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2158244018772888>