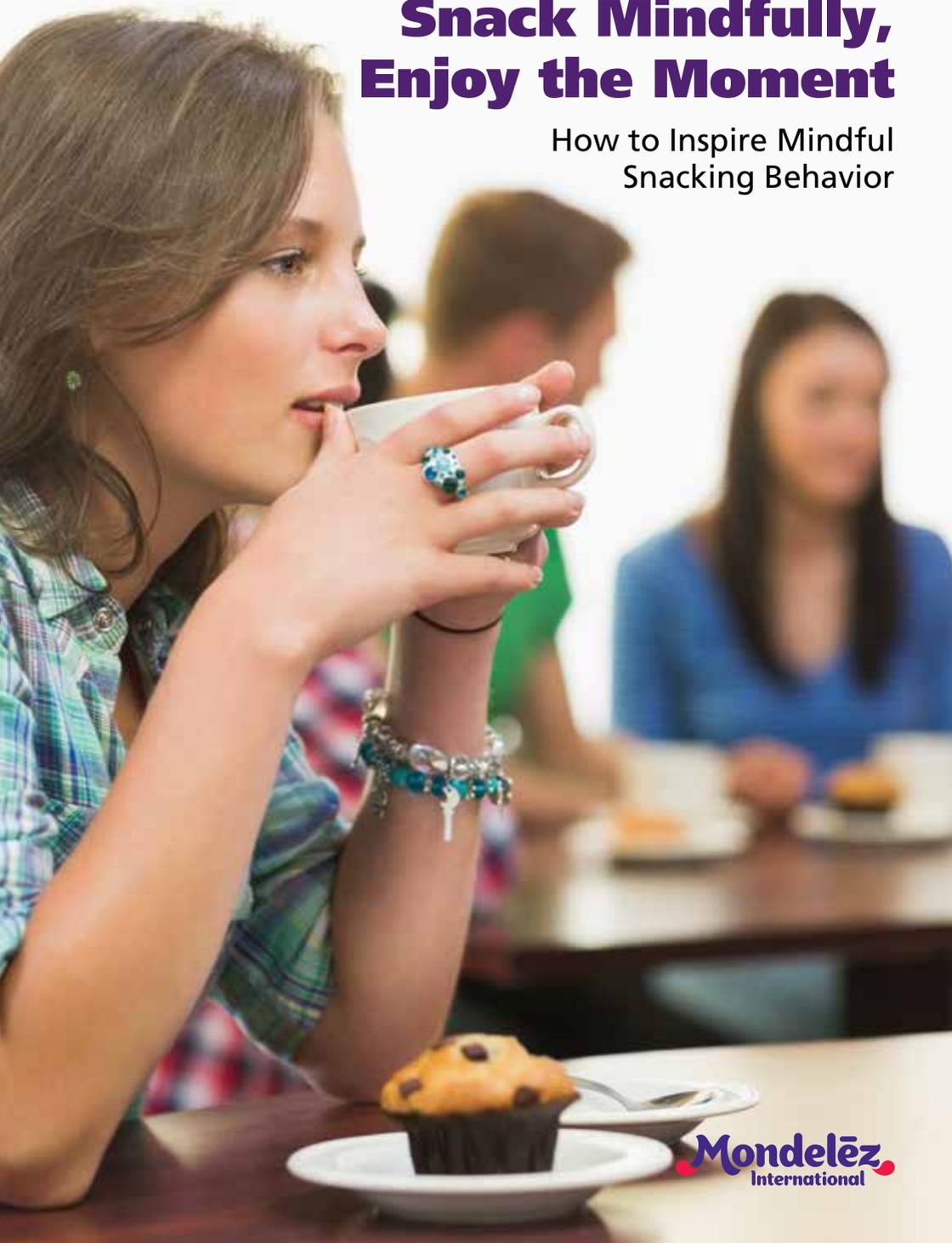


*Tips and Tools for Health Professionals and Educators*

# **Snack Mindfully, Enjoy the Moment**

How to Inspire Mindful  
Snacking Behavior





## A Message from Dr. Susan Albers

Every day, people seeking a healthier lifestyle often encounter different recommendations about *what* foods and beverages they should have or avoid. However, little guidance is given on *why and how* to eat or drink – to get the most out of the eating experience. One approach to help your patients (or clients) shift their thinking from not just the *what* but to the *why and how* is called **mindful eating**.

**Mindful eating is a behavior that encourages eating with conscious intention and attention.**



It's about creating a positive experience when eating food – from listening to one's appetite and satiety cues to paying attention to the taste and full enjoyment of food. It's about helping people feel satisfied, refreshed and energized, while removing any guilt that might be associated with eating. In fact, mindful eating is clinically proven to lead to healthier habits and a more positive relationship with food.<sup>1,2</sup> Research also indicates that focusing attention while eating helps people enjoy food more<sup>3</sup> and prevents overeating.<sup>4,5</sup>



Dr. Susan Albers, Psy.D., is a clinical psychologist and *New York Times* best-selling author of seven books on mindful eating. She also conducts mindful eating workshops. Mondelēz International commissioned Dr. Albers as a consultant to create this guide on why and how to snack mindfully.

**...mindful eating is clinically proven to lead to healthier habits and a more positive relationship with food.**





## Guiding Your Patients on How to Snack Mindfully

Mindful snacking can be taught in easy and practical steps, based on clinical research in the field. This approach will help your patients shift their focus from not just *what* snacks to choose but also to *why* and *how* they snack, so they can be more in tune with eating as a conscious behavior. Ultimately, this behavior can be linked to helping achieve a healthier lifestyle.

Before guiding your patients on **WHY** and **HOW** to snack, it may be important to assess the following:

1. What are some challenges they face when snacking (e.g., lack of time, stress, boredom, multi-tasking)?
2. What recent snacking experience was satisfying? What did they enjoy about it?
3. If they could change something about their snacking behavior, what would it be?

To help you more effectively assess each patient and improve their snacking behaviors, please find some questions in this booklet you can ask them directly. Encourage your patients to answer these same questions as they go about their day.

Mindful eating can play an important role not only during meals but also when snacking, as it is an easy and versatile approach that can be applied any time of day.

Due to the fast pace at which many people live, snacking has become a common behavior. According to a global survey of 30,000 people across 60 countries, people not only snack to satisfy hunger between meals (76% of respondents), but also to replace main meals like breakfast, lunch and dinner (52%, 43% and 40%, respectively).<sup>6</sup> This global culture of snacking further emphasizes why it's so important to teach your patients how to eat in a mindful, attentive and sustainable way.

This guide can help you empower them to snack mindfully. It outlines a simple and practical approach and provides an overview of the clinical research on the benefits of improved snacking habits. It also provides tips and tools on how to inspire mindful snacking behavior and methods to overcome common hurdles.

## WHY are they snacking?

The foundation of mindful snacking is to help patients consciously listen to their body and identify what their **PREFERENCES** and needs are for that moment. Patients can often be confused by hunger signals and need guidance on how to respond to them.

Mindful snacking focuses on teaching patients how to be more in tune with their body's internal cues (e.g., a rumbling stomach, wanting a pause in their day or pick me up, feeling stressed or excited) while also being aware of external cues<sup>7</sup> (e.g., being served a snack at a party or work gathering, just because it's there).

Help your patients be aware of both cues and encourage them to respond in a thoughtful way. For instance, automatically reacting to external cues can lead to overeating. Instead, when patients mindfully respond to their internal cues, they feel more in charge of their snacking experience.<sup>8</sup> Help them tune into their snack preferences and body's needs.

Another primary reason people eat is for **SATISFACTION**. Consuming food and snacks isn't just to satisfy hunger. People often eat to satisfy a desire for a specific taste (e.g., creamy), sensation (e.g., crunch) or to meet a need (e.g., more energy). Being able to anticipate and identify exactly what your patients want, helps them to choose just the right snack. This is what leads to pleasure and feeling content.



### ASK:

1. How hungry or thirsty are you right now? When will you eat next? When did you eat last?
2. Do you want fuel for energy, a jump-start to your day or a treat?
3. Do you want something savory or sweet, creamy or crunchy, hot or cold, soft or crispy?



## Help your patients:

### Focus on their body's internal cues

- Desire for a snack with a certain taste or texture
- Need for fuel, an energizer or comfort
- Hunger, boredom, excitement or stress

### Pay attention to external cues

- Time of day (e.g., mid-morning, mid-afternoon, evening)
- Social situations (e.g., a celebration, family time at the park)
- Convenience (just because it's there)

**...when patients mindfully respond to their internal cues, they feel more in charge of their snacking experience.**



# HOW are they snacking?

Encourage your patients to be present in the moment.

Mindful snacking involves **GIVING ATTENTION** to the “now” and focusing on the snacking experience from start to finish. Research indicates this helps people enjoy their food more<sup>3</sup> and prevents overeating.<sup>4,5</sup> Eating while distracted or with less awareness, however, has been repeatedly shown to cause people to eat larger portion sizes.<sup>9</sup>

## ASK:

1. Are you reducing distractions, such as turning the TV, phone and computer off?
2. Are you giving each bite or sip enough attention?
3. Are you finishing your mouthful before starting the next?

**Encourage your patients to be present in the moment.**

**USING THEIR SENSES** is another critical element of snacking mindfully. A full sensory snacking experience involves smelling the aromas, tasting the flavors, feeling the texture, looking at the shapes and colors, and hearing the crunch of a snack. Tuning into how food looks, sounds, smells and is arranged can impact their satisfaction level and change how much they eat. Tasting food in this way, instead of eating while disengaged, helps increase the overall enjoyment of a snack. Teaching patients how to savor food is a key aspect of snacking mindfully.

Encourage your patients to savor their snack using all of their senses whenever they take a bite.

## ASK:

1. Are you looking at, smelling and tasting each bite?
2. Are you taking the time to feel the texture as you chew?
3. Do you hear the crunch as you chew or the swish as you swallow?



**SLOWING DOWN** the pace of eating is another key aspect to improving enjoyment and feeling satisfied. Studies have found that people who chew more slowly report greater pleasure from food.<sup>4</sup> Eating at a slower rate and being better attuned to satiety cues also helps prevent overeating.<sup>10</sup>

Help your patients learn to slow down when they eat and to recognize when they feel truly satisfied.

**ASK:**

1. Are you taking enough time between each bite?
2. Are you chewing slowly enough to enjoy the taste of the snack?
3. Are you full and/or satisfied?





# { Why + What + How = **SNACKING MINDFULLY** }

Ultimately, **WHY** and **HOW** your patients engage in their snacking process should be both empowering and enjoyable. People who eat mindfully report a better relationship with food and their bodies.<sup>2,11-13</sup> When recognized and reinforced, these feelings can encourage the desire to continue practicing mindful snacking.

Help your patients evaluate the outcomes of adopting mindful snacking.

**Remember** – In addition to asking these questions of your patients, getting at the *whys* and *hows* of their snacking, you can also recommend they regularly “check in” with themselves by answering these same questions. This will help translate your work with them into real-life change, and may help drive additional productive discussions about mindful snacking.

**ASK:**

1. Did the snack meet your needs in that moment?
2. Do you feel in charge and confident about your snacking experience?
3. Was it easy to be mindful?

**The aim of mindful snacking is to bring the WHY, WHAT and HOW together for a more satisfying and empowering snacking experience!**



# The Benefits of Mindful Eating and Snacking

The following is a snapshot of clinical trials and literature reviews on the benefits of mindful eating and related interventions, such as intuitive eating and meditation. Benefits are varied and include improving emotional and physical health by reducing emotional eating, helping to manage portion sizes, enhancing satiety cues and improving people’s relationship with food.

Author	Intervention	Method and Key Findings
Alberts, 2010 <sup>14</sup>	Mindfulness-based strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7-week, manual-based training to promote regulation of cravings by means of acceptance of 19 adults.</li> <li>• Experimental group reported significantly lower cravings for food compared to the control group.</li> </ul>
Alberts, 2012 <sup>1</sup>	Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) – eating intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8-week, randomized controlled study of 26 adult women with disordered eating behaviors.</li> <li>• Compared to controls, participants in the mindfulness intervention showed significantly greater decreases in food cravings, dichotomous thinking, body image concerns, emotional eating and external eating. Findings suggest mindfulness can be effective in reducing factors associated with problematic eating behavior.</li> </ul>
Bruce, 2016 <sup>15</sup>	Intuitive eating in relation to disordered eating, body image, emotional functioning, and other psychosocial correlates in adult women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic review of 24 studies.</li> <li>• Intuitive eating was associated with less disordered eating, a more positive body image, greater emotional functioning, and a number of other psychosocial correlates that have been examined less extensively.</li> </ul>
Bush, 2014 <sup>16</sup>	Mindfulness and intuitive eating skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intervention or waitlist comparison group assessment at pre- and post-10 weeks of 124 adult female employees or partners/spouses.</li> <li>• The study provides support for an intervention combining intuitive eating and mindfulness for treatment of problematic eating behaviors and body dissatisfaction.</li> </ul>
Dalen, 2010 <sup>17</sup>	Mindfulness training (mindfulness meditation, mindful eating and group discussion, with emphasis on awareness of body sensations, emotions and triggers to overeat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 weeks of mindfulness training group curriculum of 2-hour group classes with 2 monthly follow-up classes for 10 obese adults.</li> <li>• Statistically significant increases in measures of mindfulness and cognitive restraint around eating, and statistically significant decreases in weight, eating disinhibition, binge eating, depression, perceived stress, physical symptoms, negative affect and C-reactive protein.</li> </ul>



Author	Intervention	Method and Key Findings
Dunn, 2017 <sup>18</sup>	Mindful eating, weight loss program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15-week, randomized controlled study of 80 people, of which 42 participated in a mindful eating program and 38 became part of the control group while waiting to join the program.</li> <li>• Those in the experimental group lost a mean of 1.9 kg over the 15 weeks. The others on the waiting list lost a small amount, 0.3 kg.</li> </ul>
Forman, 2016 <sup>8</sup>	Mindful decision making (MDT), inhibitory control training (ICT), MDT + ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7-day intervention of 119 adults who are salty snack eaters.</li> <li>• MDT and ICT both decreased hedonically-motivated snacking. MDT benefited emotional eaters. No additional benefits from the combination of MDT and ICT were detected.</li> </ul>
Godfrey, 2015 <sup>11</sup>	Mindfulness-based interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic review and meta-analysis of 19 studies.</li> <li>• Beneficial effects seen with these interventions on binge eating.</li> </ul>
Herbert, 2013 <sup>19</sup>	Interoceptive sensitivity (as measured by a heartbeat perception task, intuitive eating and body mass index)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurement of Intuitive Eating Scale (IES), heartbeat perception test, State-trait Anxiety Inventory and BMI of 111 healthy adult women.</li> <li>• Interoceptive sensitivity was positively related to total IES score.</li> </ul>
Katterman, 2014 <sup>2</sup>	Mindfulness meditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic review of 14 studies.</li> <li>• Found decrease in binge eating and emotional eating. Evidence for weight loss was mixed.</li> </ul>
Kristeller, 2014 <sup>20</sup>	Mindfulness-based eating awareness training (MB-EAT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9-week randomized trial of 150 overweight or obese adults.</li> <li>• MB-EAT decreased binge eating and related symptoms at a clinically meaningful level, with improvement related to the degree of mindfulness practice.</li> </ul>
Mason, 2016 <sup>21</sup>	Mindfulness-based intervention for weight loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Randomized controlled trial of 194 obese adults testing a 5.5-month diet-exercise program with or without mindfulness training.</li> <li>• Mindfulness (relative to control) participants had significant reductions in reward-driven eating at 6 months and weight loss at 12 months. A diet and exercise intervention that includes mindfulness training may promote weight loss.</li> </ul>



Author	Intervention	Method and Key Findings
O'Reilly, 2014 <sup>12</sup>	Mindfulness training, including combined mindfulness and cognitive behavioral therapies, mindfulness-based stress reduction, acceptance-based therapies, mindful eating programs, and combinations of mindfulness exercises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic review of 21 papers.</li> <li>• 18 (86%) of the reviewed studies reported improvements in binge eating, emotional eating, external eating and dietary intake.</li> </ul>
Robinson, 2013 <sup>22</sup>	Effect of food intake memory and awareness on eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic review and meta-analysis of 24 studies.</li> <li>• Eating when distracted produced a moderate increase in immediate intake. Attentive-eating interventions provided a novel approach to aid weight loss and maintenance without the need for conscious calorie counting.</li> </ul>
Timmerman, 2012 <sup>13</sup>	Mindful restaurant eating intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6-week, 2-hour small group sessions for 35 adult women aged 40-59 years.</li> <li>• Participants in the intervention group lost significantly more weight, had lower average daily caloric and fat intake, had increased diet-related self-efficacy and had fewer barriers to weight management when eating out.</li> </ul>
Warren, 2017 <sup>23</sup>	Mindful eating and intuitive eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured literature review of 68 papers.</li> <li>• Mindful eating techniques can help change eating behaviors, including binge eating disorders, emotional eating and eating in response to external cues. Mindful eating may also help prevent weight gain.</li> </ul>

For additional resources, visit [www.mondeleznutritionscience.com](http://www.mondeleznutritionscience.com).



# Tips for Inspiring Mindful Snacking Behavior

Full adoption of mindful snacking may take time. Try these tips to inspire your patients:

Do	Don't
Emphasize the goal of snacking mindfully is to improve health, quality of life and their relationship with food	Equate snacking mindfully with weight loss
Encourage small gradual steps, especially when trying mindful snacking for the first time	Force patients to "take control"
Remind your patients that all snacks can be part of a healthy, balanced diet	Talk about snacking or foods as "good or bad" or "right or wrong"
Reinforce that it's easier to start a new behavior, like snacking mindfully, than to stop an old one	Blame eating habits or create strict rules on how to eat





# Overcoming Common Concerns

## ☾ “I don’t have the time right now.”

**Response:** Mindful snacking can be easily integrated into your day by making just a few small shifts in your eating habits. For instance, you can bring more awareness and attention to how you eat – whether you’re on the bus or at a park – without devoting too much time. It’s simply a case of being more thoughtful about your snacking.

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## ☾ “I’m too stressed out to start snacking mindfully right now.”

**Response:** It’s true that life can be stressful at times, but changing eating habits doesn’t have to be. Snacking mindfully may actually help lower stress levels by helping you feel empowered and more in control about your food choices. Let’s focus on what you feel you can do right now. Even small steps can help make a difference. What is one aspect of mindful snacking you can try without feeling overwhelmed?

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## ☾ “Is mindful eating a trend?”

**Response:** Mindful snacking is not a trend or short-term solution. It’s a long-term and sustainable approach to snacking with intention and improving your relationship with food.

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## ☾ “Do I need special training?”

**Response:** Snacking mindfully doesn’t require any equipment, study or special training. Anyone can adopt it!

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## ☾ “How can I encourage my family and friends to eat mindfully?”

**Response:** Set an example. Show them how to snack mindfully by consciously eating slowly and savoring each bite with full attention. Tell them when you are enjoying the experience. Your friends and family may be inspired to give it a try. But remember to let them join in at their own pace.

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## ☾ “How can I help my children to enjoy mindful snacking, too?”

**Response:** Being a role model is a great first step! Start by asking your child(ren) why they want a snack (are they hungry? do they need a treat? are other children having a snack nearby?), so they ask themselves this question in the future. Empower them to choose one snack that meets their need. Then, gently remind them to enjoy their snack slowly and describe the flavors, textures, colors and what they like about it. Over time, your child(ren) will learn to snack mindfully even when you are not there.



**Your inspiration, motivation and guidance can help improve your patients' snacking habits and their relationship with food in healthy, positive ways.**

**Remember, small practical changes that are part of the mindful snacking approach can make a big difference.**



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The logo for Mondelēz International is centered at the bottom of the page. It features the brand name "Mondelēz" in a white, stylized, cursive font with a macron over the 'e'. Below it, the word "International" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

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