

What Is Normal Eating?

- ❑ It is regulated primarily by internal hunger cues. For the most part, it is eating when you are hungry and stopping when you are satisfied.
- ❑ For one week, try carrying a post-it note designated as your hunger-rating tool. Prior to eating, rate your hunger using the scale. If you are >5, forgo the urge to eat. If you decide to eat, measure your hunger 15 minutes after your first bite. Eat accordingly.
- ❑ Normal eating is eating at regular times, typically three meals and one or two snacks depending on your hunger and schedule.
- ❑ Normal eating takes planning, but keeps its place as only one important area of your life.
- ❑ Normal eating promotes clear thinking, concentration, and mood stability, and healthy weight and body size.
- ❑ Normal eating focuses on the quality (taste, ingredients, texture) to make food decisions rather than what is cheap or a bigger portion.
- ❑ Legalizing all foods, and realizing that *occasionally* you're allowed to eat because you're happy, sad, or for other reasons.
- ❑ Normal eating is also being able to forgo certain foods so that you can get the right foods in a healthy balance. It's OK to leave some food on your plate!
- ❑ Normal eating feels good. It's making food choices for health and energy, pleasure and social reasons, and afterward, STILL feeling good.

Hunger Scale
Using a scale from 1- 10
1= absolutely starved
5 = not hunger/not full but just right
10 = Thanksgiving full.

In our current lifestyles, we are bombarded constantly with messages to eat highly processed, convenient foods in exaggerated portions. Take notice of your environment and take steps to improve and foster healthy eating.

How is it different from dysfunctional eating?

- ❑ Normal eating is positive and flexible eating that allows you to choose food that you like to eat and trusting your body to make up for any mistakes in eating. Sometimes you will overeat, and other days you won't eat enough. It's ok.
- ❑ Dysfunctional or disordered eating patterns are irregular (fasting, bingeing, dieting, skipping meals). Instead of feeling better after eating, the person is likely to feel worse.
- ❑ Feeling tired, moody, chilled, inability to concentrate, and increasingly self-absorbed is common. Thoughts of food, hunger, and weight may occupy 20 to 65 percent of a person's time.
- ❑ Increased susceptibility to colds, flu, injury and other health problems. Lack of proper nutrition increases the risk for macro/micronutrient deficiencies leading to hair loss, skin dryness, chap lips, weak fingernails, dry/dull hair.

References: Satter, Ellyn, RD, ACSW. *How to Get Your Kid to Eat...But Not Too Much.* Berg, Frances. *Children and Teens Afraid to Eat: Helping Youth in Today's Weight-Obsessed World*, by Frances M. Berg.