



Nutrition notes from WakeMed Children's



mindful eating

Tips and Guidelines for Eating Healthy

> Hunger scale

Use the hunger scale to rate your hunger and determine when you have reached your ideal fullness.

- 10 **Stuffed.** You are so full you feel nauseous. You don't want to or can't move, and feel like you never want to look at food again.
- 9 **Very uncomfortably full.** You need to loosen your clothes. You ate too much and can no longer be in good company.
- 8 **Uncomfortably full.** You feel bloated and your body actually starts to hurt.
- 7 **Full.** You feel a little uncomfortable. You are past satisfaction but your body still thinks it has room for a few more bites.
- 6 **Perfectly comfortable.** You feel satisfied.
- 5 **Comfortable.** You're more or less satisfied, but could eat a little more. You've given your body the right amount of fuel to feel energized and productive.
- 4 **Slightly uncomfortable.** You're just beginning to feel signs of hunger and you are thinking about food. Your body is sending signals that you might want to eat.
- 3 **Uncomfortably hungry.** Your stomach is rumbling and you have a strong urge to eat.
- 2 **Very uncomfortable.** You feel irritable and are unable to concentrate. You may even feel a little nauseous.
- 1 **Weak and light-headed.** You are out of energy, have a headache, and your stomach acid is churning.
- 0 **Starving.** You are so hungry you do not want to eat.

> Strategies to help when eating

- **Don't go to the table famished:** If you eat when you are overly hungry, it may lead to poor food choices.
 - **Slow your pace & volume:** The slower you eat, the less likely you are to overeat.
 - **Develop a mental strategy:** Plan your approach to a meal or an event with food to help you feel more confident in making healthy food choices.
 - **Limit sugary beverages:** It's easy to drink hundreds of calories and not feel the same satisfaction as when you eat.
 - **Choose your calories wisely:** Eat small or moderate portions of foods that are higher in fat and calories. Take time to enjoy these foods and balance them with larger portions of lower calorie options.
 - **Be gentle with yourself:** If you eat too much during a meal, don't give up! Get back on track as soon as you can.
 - **Keep moving:** Staying active is a great way to burn off excess calories and relieve stress at the same time.
 - **Keep meal choices simple:** The more options, the greater the tendency to overeat.
- Other things that might make you hungry**
- **Sleep** – Not getting enough sleep may increase hormones that make you hungry.
 - **Dehydration** – Not getting enough fluid can sometimes be confused with feelings of hunger. Drinking water before and during your meal will help you feel more full and keep you from becoming dehydrated.
 - **Emotions** – Ask yourself how you feel before eating. If you are more bored or stressed than hungry then save those calories and choose a fun activity to do, such as taking a walk, playing a sport, listening to music or reading a book.