

# How to Eat Mindfully

for less bloating & a happier tummy



# Busy, busy!

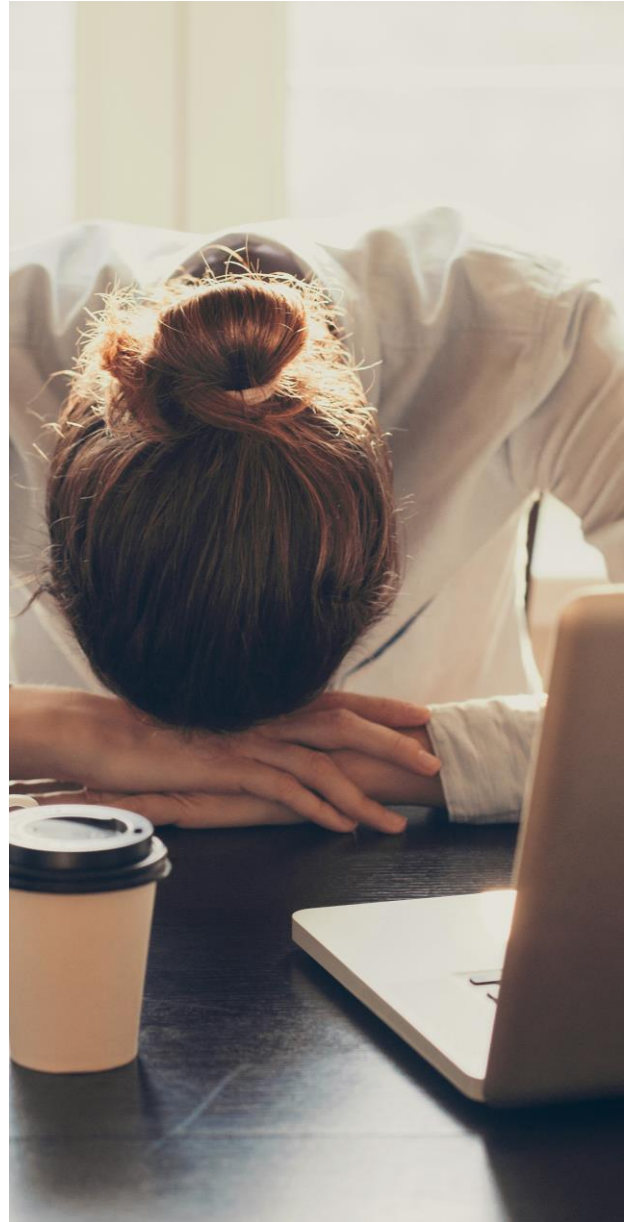
**You've got so much to get done today.** Up early, racing around getting yourself and perhaps your family all ready for the day ahead. You're brushing your teeth as you check a message on your phone and look for clean socks. No time for breakfast, you'll have to grab a takeaway coffee and muffin to eat on the bus.

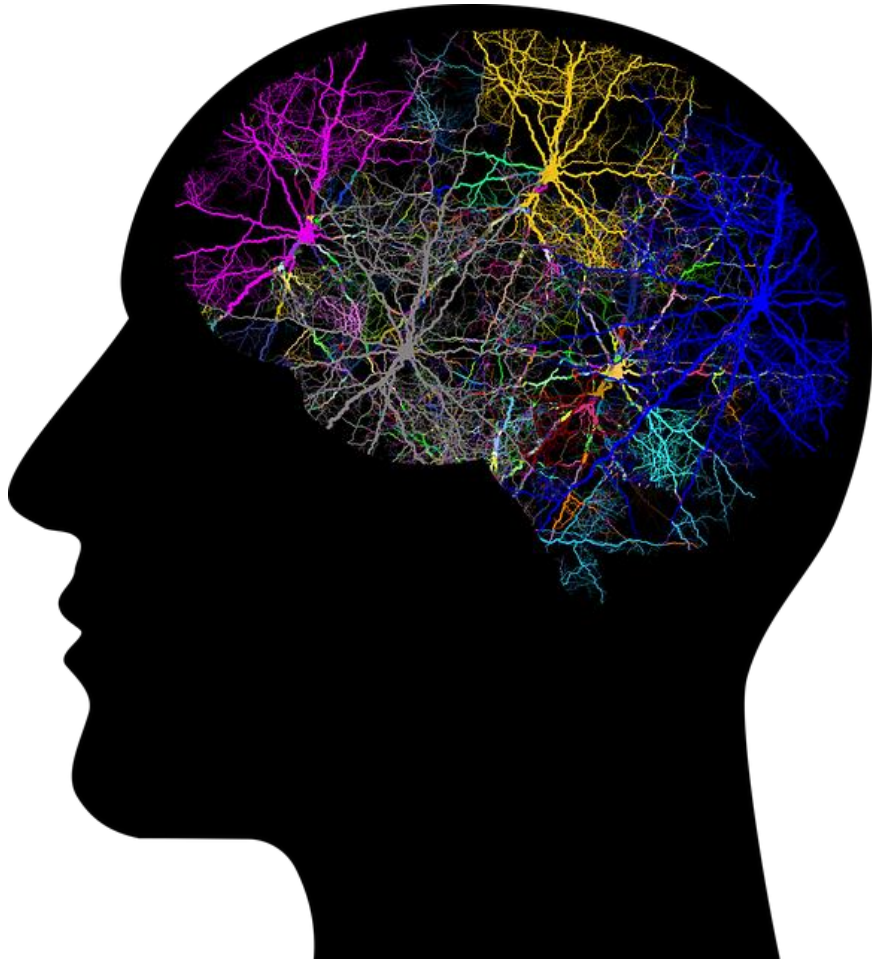
No lunch break again today – it's far too hectic. So you eat at your desk/in the car/on the go *again* and keep working through.

Finally home and you sit down exhausted on the lounge to watch your favourite TV show and shovel in some dinner.

## **Does this sound familiar?**

Eating this way means you aren't digesting your food properly or absorbing nutrients. You're also more likely to suffer from digestive symptoms like bloating, gas, constipation, heartburn or reflux.





## **‘Rest & Digest’ vs ‘Fight or Flight’**

Our nervous system controls the communication between our brain and our body, via the spinal cord and the many nerves that run like a highway throughout our body. Your nervous system has two states of being; ‘fight or flight’ or ‘rest and digest’.

# Eat Only in 'Rest & Digest' Mode

When you are operating in 'fight or flight' mode, all your blood and energy is sent to the brain, heart and muscles so that you can either fight or run away from danger. Adrenalin is surging through your body making your heart beat faster, your mind is whirring and you are on high alert. At the same time, body systems like digestion and reproduction 'pause' as these are not necessary for immediate survival.

Even though the dangers of our caveman ancestors are no longer troubling us on a daily basis (thankfully, Sabre-toothed Tigers are extinct!) our nervous system has not changed much since primitive times.

Stressors like work deadlines, finances, exams, driving in traffic etc. are still triggers that put us in the exact same stress response.

To our brain and body, it's like we are being chased by a hungry beast.



In 'fight or flight' mode you are not in the best state to digest your food. If you eat when your nervous system is thinking it needs to be preparing for combat, you will likely suffer digestive symptoms like heartburn, indigestion, bloating, gas and either constipation or diarrhea.

Your body is not focusing on digesting food, so you won't absorb as many nutrients from whatever you are eating.

Your body digests food best when the nervous system is in 'rest and digest' mode. This is when blood flow is going to the digestive tract, the mind is at peace, your heart rate is calm and you are focusing on your food.

# Make TIME to EAT!

When you are Eating...  
just EAT!



How hard would it really be if you took 10-15 minutes out of your day to stop and eat a meal?

Is the whole world really going to fall to pieces if you take a break? Probably not. But if you don't start to eat mindfully, YOU may fall to pieces!

Stopping what you are doing to sit down at the table to eat is so simple, and oh so important for digestive health.

Don't work on your computer, watch TV or drive when you are eating.

**Ready to learn the steps to EAT MINDFULLY? Well read on...**



# 1. Meditate on Your Food

*As in think about it, don't sit on it!*

Look at your food. Imagine how good it is going to taste. Think of all the wonderful nutrition inside every tasty bite.

Picture all the lovely people who had to work to bring this food in front of you – the farmer, the shopkeeper, whoever prepared it or cooked it (maybe that was you!)

Smell it. Yes... put your nose near your meal and take a long, deep sniff. Breathe in those aromas.

You may be wondering why I'm making you meditate on your food. It's not because deep down I'm a hippy.



It's because this kicks off your *Cephalic Phase* of digestion. This is your brain realising that your body is about to eat something and it signals for your digestive juices to get going.

Your whole digestive tract prepares for the impending arrival of your meal.

Digestive juices are flowing and this then helps you digest your food.

## 2. Chew Your Food!

Were you ever told as a child to chew each mouthful 20 times before swallowing? It's good advice.

We have teeth because we need them to chew, grind, mush and pulverize our food before it enters our stomach.

This is really important for good digestion and it is a step that is often missed.

Inhaling your food like a hungry Labrador means that it hits your stomach barely broken down, making your poor stomach work really hard to digest your food. Dogs have incredibly acidic stomach acid, so they can do this. But we humans can't! We have those back molars for a reason and we need to use them!

So eat slowly. Chew your food. Allow the saliva to mix in with it and get it all nice and mushy before you swallow it.



# 3. Enjoy Your Food

Savouring your food and really enjoying eating is also super important.

So, while you are doing all that slow eating and chewing, take a moment to really taste your food.

Explore its texture in your mouth.

Move it around with your tongue.

Enjoy the delicious flavours and sensations as you chew (and chew, and chew!).





# 4. Small Sips, Not Guzzled Gallons



Try not to drink too many liquids while you are eating as this may dilute your stomach acid and prevent proper digestion.

Best to drink large amounts of liquids half an hour either side of your meal.

If you are enjoying a glass of wine with your meal, that's okay, just take small sips throughout the meal, rather than guzzling down several glasses.

The most important point is BEFORE you eat – as you really need your stomach acid and all your enzymes nice and strong, not diluted by too much liquid.

So don't be fooled by the weight loss myth of chugging down water to 'fill you up' before a meal. It's bogus. Better to digest well and eat mindfully!

# 5. Stop Before You're Full!

Unless this really is the last meal you will get before your 5 day trek through the Andes, it really is best to stop BEFORE you feel full.

Eating too much in one sitting puts a huge strain on your digestion. There's not enough stomach acid to break down your food, your stomach gets stretched and can't work effectively and anything that cannot be made into energy gets stored as fat.

The Japanese have a beautiful way of saying this.

They say, "hara hachi bu" translated to "eat until you are eight parts (out of ten) full".



# 6. Share a Meal

As much as you can, eat with people you love (or at least ones that won't give you indigestion!)  
We are inherently social beings and cultures from the dawn of time have shared meals together.

Sitting with another person or a group of people to all eat together just feels right, doesn't it?

Friends, family, work colleagues, fellow students – whoever it is, make sure that you enjoy some light conversation with your meal.

Maybe you could tell them how to 'eat mindfully for better digestion' - Just don't talk with your mouth full!



# About Me

So, let me introduce myself.

My name is Katarina Mitrovic and I am a Nutritionist & Naturopath at INTO Health clinic.

I am very passionate about healthy living. I believe that eating nutritious food and keeping fit and healthy is something every BODY deserves.

As a wife and a mother of two active kids I know how hard it can be to manage a family, work and find time to look after our own health. But, if you are not well yourself, how can you look after your loved ones?



This e-book is an introduction to how simple lifestyle and dietary changes can help you achieve better health and wellbeing.

As a holistic practitioner I see people like you in consultations and provide individualised nutritional/naturopathic assessments and treatment options that are tailored to your individual needs and circumstances.

For more details about my services or to book an appointment, head over to my website at [www.intohealth.com.au](http://www.intohealth.com.au) , FB page @intohealthnutrition or Instagram @into\_health\_nutrition.

