

# Food for Thought

## What is mindful eating?

- Allowing yourself to become aware of the positive and nurturing opportunities that are available through food preparation and consumption by respecting your own inner wisdom.
- Choosing to eat food that is both pleasing to you and nourishing to your body by using all your senses to explore, savor, and taste.
- Learning to be aware of physical hunger and satiety cues to guide your decision to begin eating and to stop eating.
- Acknowledging responses to food (likes, neutral or dislikes) without judgment.

### Free Handout for Individuals from The Center for Mindful Eating

#### Take a Bite on the Wild Side

By Donald Altman, M.A., LPC

Are you using your taste buds to their fullest extent? The human tongue has more than 10,000 taste buds that can sense sweetness, saltiness, bitterness, sourness and umami – which is a meaty, broth-like flavor. This nuanced taste apparatus enables us to savor and sample from food's amazing diversity. Did you know, for example, that there are thousands of varieties of apples? The average grocery store contains thousands of items, and yet, how many of us stick to buying the same things or eating the same meals over and over... and over? Booorrrring!

The antidote to food boredom is flexibility and curiosity, and your taste buds are ideal for experimenting with different foods and food combinations. One way to "take a bite on the wild side" is

to use an attitude of openness and curiosity in your next meal or snack. Even one new food a week



(or daily) can broaden your awareness and open you to the possibility of eating new and exciting foods.

Once a day for the next week, stop and notice what you might habitually eat at mealtime or for a snack. Then, take a moment of pause and give yourself

permission to choose a different food or a different flavor. Suppose you are in the grocery store looking for a dip for crackers or chips. You might choose something like hummus (ground chickpeas with a variety of tasty ingredients ranging from garlic to lemon juice) instead of your regular choice. When dining out, replace that standard burger with a wrap or another dish that is new to you. If you are stuck on the same green veggies night after night – such as broccoli, asparagus or spinach – experiment with cooking with kale or sugar snap peas. Use arugula in your salad instead of romaine. You may discover there's something to the adage "Variety is the spice of life." It's also a mindful eating practice. Enjoy it often.

*Donald Altman, LPC, is a psychotherapist, former Buddhist monk, award-winning writer, and author of the new book One Minute Mindfulness. He currently serves as Vice President of TCME. His website is [www.mindfulpractices.com](http://www.mindfulpractices.com). Contact: [info@mindfulpractices.com](mailto:info@mindfulpractices.com).*