HOW TO EAT MORE MINDFULLY

⭐ When and why you are eating?
Are you hungry, stressed, sad, or perhaps you're eating for a celebration? Become aware of any habits, traditions or emotions that influence your eating behaviours and food choices. Learn to distinguish between actual hunger and non-hunger triggers for eating. Before you eat, ask yourself "am I actually hungry?", and if so, "what type of food do I want?". If you're not actually hungry, are you thirsty, or is there something else you're missing, perhaps emotionally, or are you looking for food perhaps just out of habit or boredom?

⭐ Where are you eating?
When you're about to eat, set yourself a nice place to eat at your table, put your food on a plate and use cutlery. Try to avoid eating on the run, or when standing or walking. Remove any distractions, as this reduces your focus on your meal, and can lead to mindless eating and overeating. Turn off the TV, put away your phone, and don't eat while working, using your computer or reading.

⭐ How are you eating? Take 3 deep breaths before you start to eat, and begin to eat slowly, chewing each mouthful thoroughly before taking a new bite. This not only helps you to become more aware of your body's fullness signals, but also aids optimal digestion. If you are eating with others, you could try pacing yourself with the slowest eater at the table, or putting down your fork between mouthfuls can also help you slow your eating. There are also some mindful eating apps available that will prompt you to take pauses while eating, for example 20 Minute Eating.

⭐ What are you eating?
When you take a mouthful of food, engage all your senses and think about how your food looks, smells, sounds, as well as how it tastes and feels in your mouth. Closing your eyes can help you concentrate even more on the experience of eating and appreciate each mouthful. Think also about where your food has come from and who has grown and prepared it. Notice any other feelings you have about food and eating. Try to think of eating as a way to nourish your body and maintain general health and wellbeing.

Pause and check in with your hunger signals every few minutes, and eat only until you start to feel full. If you're unsure about this to begin with, you could stop eating after 20 minutes, then wait 10 minutes to see if you're still hungry rather than just continuing to eat.