

Nutrition Times

South Zone Healthy Eating Newsletter

December 2025 Nutrition Services

Mindful Eating This Holiday Season

The holiday season often brings delicious food, festive gatherings, and cherished traditions. While it's a time of joy, it can also feel overwhelming with buffets, baked goods, and the pressure to "not overdo it."



What Is Mindful Eating?

Mindful eating is the practice of bringing your full attention to the experience of eating. Instead of rushing through a meal or eating on "autopilot," it's about slowing down and noticing:

- The look, smell, taste, and texture of food.
- How hungry or full your body feels.
- The emotions and thoughts connected to eating.
- The people and surroundings you're sharing the meal with.

At its heart, mindful eating means enjoying food with awareness, without judgment, and with gratitude. It's not about eating "perfectly," it's about savoring and respecting your body's needs while also allowing food to be a source of comfort and joy.



Practical Tips for Mindful Holiday Eating

1. Pause Before You Eat

Take a deep breath and notice the food in front of you. This short pause can help you feel calmer and more present.

2. Use All Your Senses

Notice the colors, smells, and textures of your food before taking your first bite.

3. Eat Slowly

Put your fork down between bites. Chewing slowly not only helps digestion but also allows you to truly savour your meal.

4. Check In With Your Body

Ask yourself: Am I still hungry? Am I satisfied? Try to stop eating when you feel comfortable, not stuffed.

5. Choose Your Favorites

You don't have to try everything on the table. Pick the holiday foods you enjoy most and savour them.

6. Let Go of Guilt

Food is meant to be enjoyed. One meal or treat will not undo your health goals.



Food and Connection: More Than Nutrition

Eating is not just about nutrients, it's about community, comfort, and connection. Sharing a meal can:

- Reduce feelings of loneliness.
- Strengthen relationships with friends and family.
- Create joyful memories that last far longer than the food itself.

If you're eating alone this season, consider:

- Inviting a neighbor or friend for tea or a meal.
- Joining a community lunch or church supper.
- Calling a loved one while sharing a meal "together."

Additional Resources:

- [Canada Food Guide - Be Mindful of Your Eating Habits](#)
- [Hunger and Fullness Signals](#)
- [Meals with Family and Friends \(Video\)](#)

Soul-Warming, Nourishing Holiday Recipe

Creamy Holiday Spiced Chai Latte (Serves 2)

Here's a cozy option that's comforting, festive, and adds a nutrition boost such as calcium and protein from milk, as well as antioxidants from the cozy holiday flavour of cinnamon and ginger. A nourishing alternative to sugary holiday drinks like eggnog or hot chocolate.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups milk (or fortified soy milk) for extra protein + calcium
- 2 black tea bags (or decaf if preferred)
- 1 cinnamon stick (or ½ tsp ground cinnamon)
- 2 whole cloves
- 2 cardamom pods (or ¼ tsp ground cardamom)
- 1 small slice fresh ginger (or ¼ tsp ground ginger)
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp honey or maple syrup (optional)

Instructions:

Heat milk in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add tea bags, spices, and ginger. Simmer gently for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove tea bags and spices, then stir in vanilla. Sweeten lightly if desired. Pour into mugs, sprinkle with cinnamon, and enjoy warm.

Upcoming Events, Classes and Other Resources

We offer workshops to support your health and wellbeing, including sessions focused on [preventing or managing chronic disease](#). For a complete list of workshops that are available anywhere in the province, click [here](#). Check out many other resources at the [Nutrition for Older Adults](#) webpage.

Contact

Have questions? Contact your local Registered Dietitian at Community Health Services:

Medicine Hat 403-502-8200

Brooks 403-501-3300

Lethbridge 403-388-6666

For more information on this or other nutrition topics, go to:

www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca



Questions? Email us at publichealthnutrition.southzone@ahs.ca