



(902) 443-9944 phone

(902) 443-5680 fax

www.edag.ca

info@edag.ca

65 Ochterloney St., 2nd floor, Dartmouth, NS B2Y 1C3

INTUITIVE EATING

WHAT IS INTUITIVE EATING ?

Intuitive eating is being able to eat when you are hungry and continue eating until you are satisfied. It is being able to choose food you like and eat it and truly get enough of it – not just stop eating because you think you should. Intuitive eating is being able to use some moderate constraint on your food selection to get the right food, but not being so restrictive that you miss out on pleasurable foods. Intuitive eating is giving yourself permission to eat sometimes because you are happy, sad or bored, or just because it feels good. Intuitive eating is three meals a day or it can be choosing to munch along. It is leaving some cookies on the plate because you know you can have some again tomorrow, or it is eating more now because they taste so wonderful when they are fresh. Intuitive eating is overeating at times: feelings stuffed and uncomfortable. It is also under-eating at times and wishing you had more. Intuitive eating is trusting your body to make up for your mistakes in eating. Intuitive eating takes up some of your time and attention, but keeps its place as only one important area of your life.

In short, intuitive eating is flexible. It varies in response to your emotions, your schedule, your hunger, and your proximity to food.

(Adapted from: How to Get Your Kid to Eat...But Not Too Much. (pp. 69-70) by Ellyn Satter with permission of Bull Publishing Company, © 1987)

TIPS FOR INTUITIVE EATING

Your eating habits have developed over your lifetime. Changing your eating patterns takes time. This sheet gives some tips to help you normalize your eating patterns. Feed yourself the nutrition your body needs. Stop dieting. Dieting is forcing your body to survive on an inadequate amount of energy.

Always try to eat breakfast. Choose foods that you enjoy, using Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating as a guide. It is essential that you eat breakfast because it kick starts your metabolism, which is the rate at which you burn calories. Your metabolism does not begin to work properly until it was food it your system to digest and use for energy. Also, eating breakfast reduces the urge to over eat later in the day. When you skip meals you usually feel very hungry later in the day, which may trigger overeating and or binge eating. This is simply due to your body needing more nourishment.

Learn to identify your body's hunger and fullness signals. Generally, you will eat as much as your body needs if you eat when you are hungry and stop eating when you are satisfied. Respond to



your hunger. Space your meals throughout the day. For some people, this means three meals a day, for others, eating every couple of hours may be needed.

Try to stop labelling foods as either good or bad. Otherwise, when we eat a food that we think is "bad", then we feel bad. We may then feel guilty or anxious, which can lead to problems with restricting and overeating. All foods can fit into a healthy pattern: what matters is how much and how often we eat a food.

Ditch the artificial sugars. Research on artificial sweeteners has shown that they have little or no effect on weight gain, and may stimulate appetite and trigger cravings for real sugar. People often give themselves permission to binge eat products containing aspartame as they are viewed as a diet product and low in calories.

Remember how you ate when you were five years old? You most likely ate when you were hungry and stopped when you were full. Feed yourself as if you were a child. If you want a tuna sandwich for breakfast, have one! Listen to what your body is telling you.

Intuitive eating is part of taking care of yourself. Nurture and enjoy your body.

(Adapted from the BC Eating Disorders Association, 1996)

