

Eating with Our Senses!



AUDIENCE
Late Primary, Secondary



SESSION LENGTH
40 mins

About BodyKind

BodyKind Schools runs every September in conjunction with Body Image and Eating Disorder Awareness Week (BIEAW). BodyKind Schools main call to action is kindness; it encourages young people to be *kind* to their own body and to others. Online, face to face, everywhere!

Why it is important to eat with our senses.

The influence of diet culture and other external factors has resulted in people being less in tune with what their own body needs and the experience of eating isn't given the time or respect that it deserves.

By slowing down the eating experience and eating with all senses, foods can be enjoyed and we have a better opportunity to recognise when our body has eaten enough, or if it needs more.

It also ensures that food and eating is respected and valued as an important part of our day.

ACTIVITY AIM :

This activity promotes being BodyKind through eating with our senses, which is a part of mindful eating practices. By using our senses we can slow down when eating and increase the pleasure and enjoyment of food. It also helps us to be more present and aware of the hunger and fullness cues our body sends.

HOW TO RUN – Eating with our Senses

You will need:

- Paper, pen and printed Student Activity Sheets.
- Start by setting the scene - you can use the notes on the left-hand side and the first 2 paragraphs on the next page.
- Then ask students the following questions:
Q: What do we mean by eating with our senses?
 Desired response: Using our senses when eating; sight, smell, taste, touch and sound.
Q: Eating with our senses is a big part of mindful eating. What do you think mindful eating is?
 Desired response: Paying attention to the experience of eating, being present, fully engaged and eating with our senses.
Q: Why are dedicated meal-times important?
 Desired response: It helps to promote regular eating, allows you to plan food in advance, creates regular social opportunities, allows you to focus on the food and enjoy the eating experience.
Q: What strategies can help ensure we have dedicated time to eat and enjoy our meals?
 Desired responses: Making sure we're not rushed in the morning and have time for breakfast, organise a lunchtime picnic with friends, share a meal with family and carers with devices away.
- Next, provide students with *Practising Mindful Eating* Activity Sheet
- Then ask students to pair up and take turns to share the descriptive experience of eating their favourite meal, without labelling the meal. From the description provided, students will try to guess what the other student's favourite meal is.
- As an extension activity students, can take part in a mindful eating exercise.

POST ACTIVITY DISCUSSIONS

- What meal would be easiest for you to eat mindfully at home?
- Would other family members be interested in this? Why/Why not?
- Would you be able to practice mindful eating at school?
- What might be the barriers or enablers?

To help create and support a positive eating environment for students at school, please see the BodyKind tip Sheet for Educators "Creating a Positive Eating Environment for Students at School"

To find out more, contact:

E: education@butterfly.org.au
www.butterfly.org.au

Teachers Guide

Eating with Our Senses!

ENSURE A 'DO NO HARM' APPROACH when adopting this activity with students:

- This activity supports students to have a positive relationship with eating.
- Please be aware that students who may be experiencing an eating disorder, in treatment or recovery from an eating disorder may find this content challenging, or even triggering. Please ensure you share this lesson with parents/care-givers prior to running to ensure they can determine suitability of their child being involved.
- It may also pose a challenge for neuro-divergent students and/or students experiencing food insecurity.
- As this activity explores eating and eating practices, it is recommended that this activity be used at the Educator/Teacher's discretion.
- Avoid sharing personal details about your own eating experiences.
- Aim to ensure discussions are strength-based.

STEP 1: Introduce BodyKind and the activity.

We are proud to be participating in BodyKind Schools, which is an initiative of Butterfly Foundation. BodyKind Schools aims to raise awareness and promote a positive body image, by being BodyKind. It's not always easy to like, love or appreciate your body so instead BodyKind Schools encourages young people to find ways to be *kind* and practice *kindness* towards their own body and also to others.

Being BodyKind includes nourishing and fuelling our bodies regularly throughout the day with a wide variety of foods that we enjoy. It also means we give eating the respect it deserve. Today we are going to explore how we can use our senses when eating. This can help us eat more slowly, listen to our hunger and fullness cues as well as focus on the pleasure and enjoyment of food and the eating experience. This is a key part of mindful eating. Everyone is different, so if during this activity you need to take a breather or step-out please do. There's also information on all of the Activity Sheets if after today you would like to talk to someone.

STEP 2: Ask students to:

1. Work in pairs to complete the Activity Sheet

EXTENSION ACTIVITY– Mindful Eating Exercise

This mindful eating exercise, is a guided activity that provides students with the opportunity to practise slowly eating a piece of chocolate/lolly/other food using the senses to fully immerse themselves in the experience. Reminder: Neuro-divergent young people and those experiencing eating disorders may find this activity challenging. Enable students to opt out.

Set the scene by encouraging students to approach the exercise with curiosity. There are no rights or wrongs.

- LOOK at the wrapped lolly/chocolate/piece of food.
- What colour is it? What does it say? Where did it come from?
- Open the lolly/chocolate/piece of food, slowly. LISTEN. Does the wrapper make a sound?
- How do you feel? Do you feel a sense of anticipation, or an urge to immediately put the food in your mouth?
- What physical sensations do you have? What emotions are you feeling? Just note them.
- LOOK at the chocolate/lolly/piece of food. Consider its texture, colour, weight...
- SMELL the food - does the smell trigger any other senses?
- Place the chocolate/lolly/piece of food in your mouth slowly but DO NOT EAT!!
- How does it FEEL in your mouth? Where in your mouth can you taste it? What is the consistency?
- What is happening with your mouth, teeth, tongue, lips with the chocolate/lolly/piece of food in your mouth?
- MOVE the chocolate/lolly/piece of food around your mouth. Does the taste itself change? How do you feel?
- Swallow the food. Focus on the sensation. Is there a lingering taste?
- Was the flavour more intense than what it normally is? Did you enjoy the experience?
- Pause and reflect, taking a little while to consider the experience.
- Discuss how this eating experience was different to how they would normally eat?

Be mindful of food allergies. Students may bring their own food.

Practising Eating with Our Senses Student Activity Sheet

Activity Outline:

Eating food that we like and that nourishes and fuels our body is a pleasurable experience. Being Body Kind means that we value our dedicated mealtimes throughout the day, and we use this time to engage all our senses in the eating experience.

A new international student has arrived at your school. They are curious to learn about Australia and our interesting and varied food culture. They want to know more about what you eat as part of your main meals. They have asked you to describe your favourite meal, using the different senses to give a detailed description.

Task 1: Picture your favourite meal.

Close your eyes and carefully picture yourself eating your favourite meal.

When do you eat your favourite meal? **Who** do you eat it with? **Where** do you eat it?

Task 2: Describe your favourite meal using all your senses.

What does the meal look like? What colours and shapes make up the meal?

What does it taste like? Can you describe the key flavours that you can taste?

Is it spicy, chili, sweet, salty, bitter, sour, tangy, unami (savory)?

What does it sound like when you eat your meal?

Is it crunchy, slurpy, sloppy?

Can you describe what your meal smells like?

Is it fragrant, aromatic, savory, fresh?

Is your meal hot, warm or cold on your tongue?

Do you feel any other sensations on your tongue and down your throat as you imagine yourself eating this meal? *Does it activate your saliva glands, feel sticky or fiery?*

How does eating your favourite meal make you feel, emotionally and physically?

Do you feel happy, excited, content, satisfied, energised?

Practising Eating with Our Senses Student Activity Sheet (2)

How much time would you need to eat your favourite meal mindfully?

Consider one meal during the day that you are rushed and eating on the go? What strategies could you put in place to make time to sit down and eat that meal more mindfully?

Task 3: Guess the favourite meal.

Pair up with another student and take turns to describe eating your favourite meal. Remember to use all your senses and take care not to divulge the name of your meal.

Here's an example describing chicken noodle soup.

The ingredients in brackets are examples to help you understand the description. Don't use specific ingredients when describing your favourite meal, otherwise it will be too easy!

'My favourite meal has pieces which are long and curly (noodles) as well as small juicy chunks (chicken). It smells savoury and enticing, but it also has ingredients which add sweetness (vegetables) and fragrance (herbs). There are chewy parts (chicken), soft parts (noodles) and liquid parts (broth) which means it sounds slurpy when I eat it. It's a hot dish which makes me feel warm and satisfied. It's my favourite meal to eat if I'm not feeling well.

The name of the meal my partner described is:

Sometimes talking about our body and eating may be uncomfortable or even challenging for some young people.

If this is happening for you, please let your teacher know as it's ok to step out for a while. If after completing this activity you feel you might like to or feel you need to talk to someone about how you're feeling, please chat with your teacher, school wellbeing staff or a trusted adult.

TALKING HELPS!

Butterfly Foundation operates a free National Helpline for anyone struggling with their body image or eating.
8am-Midnight (AEST), 7 days a week.
Phone, webchat or email
(1800 33 4673)
www.butterfly.org.au/helpline