

Nourishing Ourselves

The stresses of medicine, combined with long work hours, family demands, and exhaustion, can leave many physicians advising patients on good nutrition, but having a hard time putting that advice into practice.

Practice Mindful Eating

Intuitive or mindful eating is defined as eating when hungry, stopping when full, and not restricting types of food eaten. Put the hunger scale into practice. Use before you start eating and before you reach for seconds.

The goal is to stay in the green zone, beginning to eat at a 3 or 4 and stopping at a 5 or 6.

The Hunger Scale



Choose water Use caffeine strategically

Choose water and other noncaloric drinks almost always. Calories from drinks do not contribute to feelings of fullness in the same way as calories from food. Drinks such as soda, smoothies, sports drinks, 100% fruit juices, kombucha, and protein drinks are often loaded with sugar.

Caffeine can improve alertness and even cognitive performance. However, it can interfere with the ability to fall or stay asleep. Try to limit drinking caffeine when you are feeling tired, during lunch or when waking up before 5am.



Practice Portion Control



Your palm - 3-4 ounces. This is the recommended portion size for a piece of meat or fish.



Your fist - 1 cup. This is the recommended portion size for vegetables or fruits.



Cupped hand - 1-2 ounces. This is the recommended portion size for nuts or seeds.



Fingertip - 1 teaspoon. This is the recommended unit of measure for butter.

Thumb - 2 Tablespoons. This is the recommended portion size for peanut butter or cheese.



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Physicians often report struggling to eat or drink properly during work hours. Research has demonstrated an association between workplace nutrition and cognition for physicians.

Add more fruits and vegetables

Add fruits and vegetables to meals and snacks as often as you can. Try these tips:

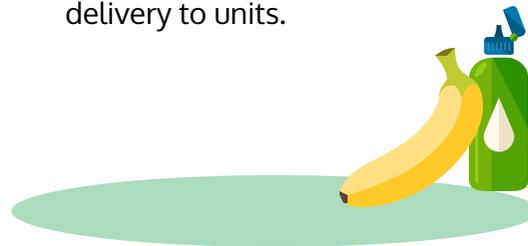
- Chop after you shop. You are more likely to eat food that is ready to go.
- Buy pre-chopped produce.
- Mix fruit and veggies into foods you are already eating. For example, add fruit to yogurt or vegetables to sandwiches or soups.
- Choose a snack on the go. Try a banana, apple, vegetable sticks, or dried fruit.



Use your practice environment!

Set yourself up for success!

- Create water refill stations throughout your practice.
- Create healthy snack stations with grab and go options. Use clear storage containers to keep these healthy snacks visible.
- Use communal spaces or team meetings to offer healthy snacks and drinks.
- Engage administrators to build healthier menus in cafes or lunchrooms. Discuss if these healthy options could be available for delivery to units.



Set small goals to create healthier habits

You can make small changes in your every day routine to build healthier, long term habits. Consider adding 1 change to your day such as carrying a refillable water bottle, setting up an automatic reminder on your phone to drink a glass of water, or add a healthy snack on your desk.

