

## FACT SHEET – HEALTHY EATING IDEAS

### SOME TOP TIPS FOR YOUR EATING PLAN

- MAKE FIVE A DAY THE EASY WAY - Make fresh vegetables and vegetable juices a part of your stress reduction diet. Veggies of bright colours such as broccoli, carrots, peas, peppers and asparagus are best.
- Choose vitamin C. The vitamin C in blueberries, black grapes, oranges and grapefruits has been linked to helping lower blood pressure and lower levels of cortisol the stress hormone.
- Drink low-fat milk and eat foods with calcium, such as low-fat cheese, cottage cheese and yogurt. Drink plenty of water. Water is key in any diet as it allows your body to flush out toxins and keep cells hydrated.
- Eat 'good' carbohydrates they encourage the brain to make more serotonin. Serotonin helps relax the brain and promote the production of feel good hormones. Choose whole grain healthy carbohydrates such as brown rice, pasta and breads which can also help level your blood sugar and relieve stress. Aim for starchy foods such as the above and potatoes to make up a third of the food you eat.
- Include a good source of fibre in your diet as it helps to slow the digestion process, which supports the flow of serotonin through your body.
- Eating a handful of nuts such as walnuts or almonds really supports the immune system as the vitamin E acts as an antioxidant.
- Try to eat oily fish such as salmon twice a week the omega-3 fatty acids in salmon not only protect against heart disease, they also help keep cortisol and adrenaline levels stable. Eat a 3-ounce serving of fatty fish twice per week.
- Spinach has high levels of iron and calcium. To aid in the absorption of iron in your body you need to eat it with vitamin C. Spinach is also rich in antioxidants, especially magnesium. Magnesium can help lower your stress levels. Not getting enough magnesium can trigger migraine headaches and make you feel tired.
- Don't skip breakfast – it's your fuel to start the day. You need to feed your brain and fuel your body with the right mix of nutrients for it to work properly. Make sure you eat regular meals.

**PRACTICE MINDFUL MUNCHING!** Have you ever noticed how we don't really think about what we are eating? How we fill our mouth with more of what we already have in before finishing (savouring or enjoying) the current mouthful? Do this exercise with a friend. You will need one small biscuit for each person. One person reads the instructions listed below while the other person completes the exercise.

1. Take one bite of a biscuit slice and then close your eyes. Do not begin chewing yet.
2. Try not to pay attention to the ideas running through your mind, just focus on the biscuit. Notice anything that comes to mind about taste, texture, temperature and sensation going on in your mouth.
3. Begin chewing now. Chew slowly, just noticing what it feels like. It's normal that your mind will want to wander off. If you notice you're paying more attention to your thinking than to the chewing, just let go of the thought for the moment and come back to the chewing. Notice each tiny movement of your jaw.
4. In these moments you may find yourself wanting to swallow the biscuit. See if you can stay present and notice the subtle transition from chewing to swallowing.
5. As you prepare to swallow the biscuit, try to follow it moving toward the back of your tongue and into your throat. Swallow the biscuit, following it until you can no longer feel any sensation of the food remaining.
6. Take a deep breath and exhale.

You may find it interesting to talk with your partner about your experience. What did you notice while chewing? Why did you swallow? Was the food no longer tasty? Did it dissolve? Were you bored?