



Food and Mood Diary

Why should I keep a food diary?

A great way to overcome mindless eating is to keep track of your food intake with a food diary. We all know keeping a record of something can be tedious and can even elicit a little anxiety, but that's ok - if you start to feel this way, write about it in this diary! You'll learn a lot about your eating habits from keeping a food diary and it really is an important step if you struggle with mindless eating or negative emotional relationships with food. If you find you start to stretch the truth a little, take a moment and ask yourself why? 'Why do you feel the need to do that'? 'Why are you finding the task so difficult'? Write it all down so you can keep a record of your journey. Its important to remember that this exercise is only meant to raise awareness of your food choices and thoughts, it is not meant to be a process of self criticism and judgement.

When should I start keeping a food diary?

Often times it's a good idea to start a food diary *before* making any changes to your diet as this will give you the chance to establish your true baseline or starting point.

Hunger scale:

1. Overly full. I am very uncomfortable and ate far too much.
2. Quite full. I ate more than was necessary and it's a little uncomfortable.
3. Slightly Full. I am no longer hungry and I don't feel uncomfortable but I probably ate more than necessary.
4. Comfortably satiated. I feel as though I ate until satisfied. I do not feel hungry or overly full at all.
5. Neutral. I do not feel hungry or full.
6. I feel as though I am reasonably satisfied but could probably eat a couple of mouthfuls more.
7. Slightly hungry. I would eat a snack but not a full meal.
8. Hungry. The urge to eat has developed and I would eat a full meal if given the opportunity.
9. Very hungry. I want to eat now and am becoming preoccupied with food.
10. Extremely hungry. I am preoccupied with food and need to eat now. I'll eat anything that's in front of me.

Example diary entry:

Meal/Snack	Hunger before	Thoughts and feelings before	Hunger after	Thoughts and feelings after	Was I satisfied?
Breakfast: 2x wholemeal toast with 1tsp margarine and 1tsp vegemite. 1 muffin. (7am)	8	Feeling preoccupied with work, rushing to get out the door. Feeling anxious. Not concentrating on what food I wanted to eat	5	I felt as though I rushed my food and didn't chew well. I felt negative towards myself for eating a muffin instead of something healthier. Guilty.	No, not really.

DAY 1

Meal/Snack	Hunger before	Thoughts and feelings before	Hunger after	Thoughts and feelings after	Was I satisfied?

DAY 2

Meal/Snack	Hunger before	Thoughts and feelings before	Hunger after	Thoughts and feelings after	Was I satisfied?

Helpful Tip: Use the hunger scale to help truly bring awareness to your internal hunger queues. After a while you will be able to differentiate between what your body really needs and what you feel you want.

DAY 3

Meal/Snack	Hunger before	Thoughts and feelings before	Hunger after	Thoughts and feelings after	Was I satisfied?

Helpful Tip: Try to be fully present every time you eat something. Turn off the TV, move away from your desk, minimise distractions. Focus on the smells, flavours and temperature of the food. Be aware of the mouth feel and if you have chewed each mouthful thoroughly.

DAY 4

Meal/Snack	Hunger before	Thoughts and feelings before	Hunger after	Thoughts and feelings after	Was I satisfied?

Helpful Tip: Become familiar with your emotions...sadness, worry, guilt, boredom, even happiness can all influence what you eat. Sometimes identifying these feelings and putting in place effective coping strategies can be just as important as changing the kinds of foods you eat.

DAY 5

Meal/Snack	Hunger before	Thoughts and feelings before	Hunger after	Thoughts and feelings after	Was I satisfied?

When walking, walk. When eating, eat.
- Zen proverb



DAY 6

Meal/Snack	Hunger before	Thoughts and feelings before	Hunger after	Thoughts and feelings after	Was I satisfied?

Helpful Tip: The food diary is only a tool, its more about the process of being aware and keeping a mental track of what's going on. After a time you won't need to keep journaling as mindful eating will become a way of life.

DAY 7

Meal/Snack	Hunger before	Thoughts and feelings before	Hunger after	Thoughts and feelings after	Was I satisfied?

The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new.
- Socrates