

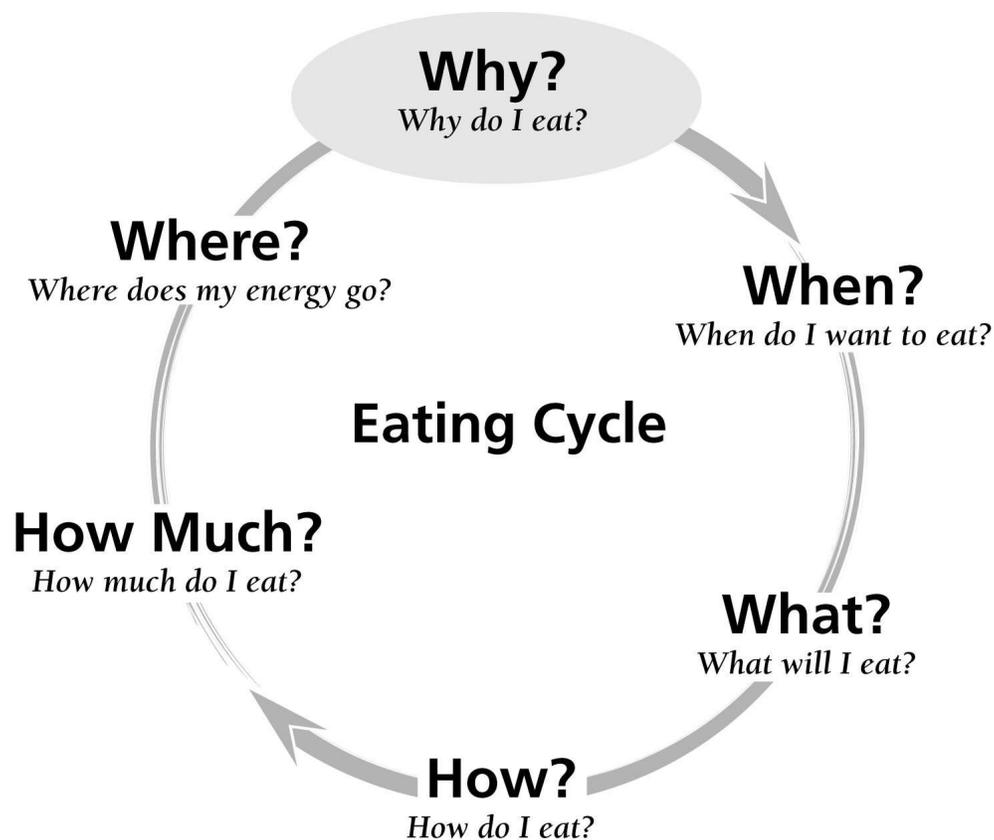


# Mindfulness-based Weight Management

by Michelle May, M.D.

MMay@AmIHungry.com or 480 704-7811

[www.AmIHungry.com](http://www.AmIHungry.com)



From *Am I Hungry?*  
*What to Do When Diets Don't Work*  
by Michelle May, M.D.

## Brief Intervention based on the Am I Hungry?® Eating Cycle

Decision	Questions to Identify Issues	Key Messages and Strategies
<p><b>Why?</b> Why do I eat?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do you think you eat?</li> <li>• Are you aware of any situations or emotions that trigger you to want to eat when you aren't hungry? (Examples: mealtimes, ballgames, certain people, stress, boredom, buffets, getting ready to start a diet?)</li> <li>• Have you tried a lot of diets? What happened? How did they work for you long term? Why?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instinctive Eating Cycle: Hunger is the primary reason for eating; it is a primitive yet reliable way to regulate fuel intake.</li> <li>• Overeating Cycle: Environmental and emotional cues can trigger an urge to eat (or continue eating) whether there is a physical need for fuel or not.</li> <li>• Restrictive Eating Cycle: Diets can lead to preoccupation with food and feelings of deprivation that eventually lead to rebound overeating.</li> </ul>
<p><b>When?</b> When do I feel like eating?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When do you feel like eating?</li> <li>• How can you tell if you're hungry?</li> <li>• How could you distract yourself from eating until you get hungry?</li> <li>• What could you do to cope more effectively with your emotional triggers for eating, for example: manage stress better, find a hobby, treat yourself to a hot bath, ask for help around the house?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask yourself, "Am I hungry?" whenever you feel like eating. (Help them develop an internalized mechanism of knowing when to eat.)</li> <li>• Hunger is a <i>physical</i> feeling; it is not the same thing as cravings, appetite or a desire to eat.</li> <li>• Getting <i>too</i> hungry can be a trigger for overeating.</li> <li>• Identify and reduce environmental cues for overeating, for example putting food out of sight, avoiding areas like the break room where food is likely to be found and ordering half-portions or sharing meals.</li> <li>• Identify and cope with emotional triggers for overeating such as boredom, stress, sadness, anger, loneliness, celebrating, or rewarding yourself. (Refer as needed).</li> </ul>
<p><b>What?</b> What do I eat?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you eat in a typical day?</li> <li>• Do you restrict yourself from eating certain foods then later give-in and overeat those foods?</li> <li>• Are there any areas of your diet that you think could be improved?</li> <li>• What specific change would you like to make at this time?</li> <li>• What health issues do you need to be aware of when choosing food (i.e. h/o high cholesterol, family h/o diabetes, BMI &gt; 25, etc.)</li> <li>• What kind of beverages do you drink?</li> <li>• What types of food do you want to eat when you're eating for emotional reasons?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Foods Fit: there are no "good" foods or "bad" foods.</li> <li>• Use balance, variety and moderation to guide your choices.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Balance - provide your body with the necessary nutrients. Balance eating for nourishment with eating for enjoyment.</li> <li>○ Variety - eat a variety of foods from the different food groups and a variety of foods within each group.</li> <li>○ Moderation – consider overall dietary intake, not just the portion size of one particular item.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ask yourself three questions when deciding what to eat: What do I want? What do I need? What do I have? Make small, focused, incremental changes, for example, increasing fruits and vegetables,</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of food could you keep on hand to eat when you are hungry?</li> </ul>	<p>improving the quality of the fluids you drink, lowering saturated and trans fat intake and switching to healthier fats.</p>
<p><b>How?</b> How do I eat?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you eat while distracted, for example, watching T.V., driving or working?</li> <li>• Do you think you eat fast?</li> <li>• Do you eat differently in private than you do in public?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat mindfully; stay aware of your body, the food and the ambience.</li> <li>• Minimize distractions: turn off the TV, eat while seated at a table.</li> <li>• Savor each bite, noticing the appearance, aromas and flavors.</li> <li>• Put your fork down between bites.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How Much?</b> How much do I eat?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you typically feel after eating?</li> <li>• How does it feel when you've eaten too much food?</li> <li>• What situations or emotions trigger overeating for you?</li> <li>• What could you do to address those triggers more effectively (for example, order less food, get up from the table, turn off the T.V., etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your stomach is only about the size of your fist so it only takes about a palm-full of food to fill it.</li> <li>• Eating too much can cause you to feel uncomfortable and sluggish. (Help them develop an internalized mechanism of portion control.)</li> <li>• When you eat more than your body needs, it has no choice but to store the extra fuel.</li> <li>• Practice ending your meal when you are satisfied instead of stuffed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Where?</b> Where do I invest my energy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where do you spend (or invest) the fuel you consume?</li> <li>• Are you physically active?</li> <li>• Do you limit your "screen time?"</li> <li>• Do you exercise? What do you like to do?</li> <li>• What else do you do? For example, do you like to play with your children, do you have hobbies, do you volunteer, do you like to travel?</li> <li>• Is there anything else you would like to do that you are not doing now? What are your goals for your relationships, your career, your life?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The food you consume provides the energy and nutrients to live, work, play and exercise.</li> <li>• When you eat more than you need, the excess fuel will be stored to be used for fuel later.</li> <li>• Increased physical activity in daily living can have a significant impact on your fuel balance.</li> <li>• Exercise will improve your health, increase your stamina and function, and make you feel better.</li> <li>• When you invest your energy in living a full, balanced life, you are less likely to use food to meet your needs, therefore breaking an Overeating and Restrictive Eating Cycle.</li> </ul>

**(Brief Interventions based on the Am I Hungry?® Eating Cycle)**