



## comfort eating over Christmas?

For many, Christmas means an abundance of food, family, and friends. But some people can experience intense loneliness and resort to comfort eating, bringing on unwanted weight gain and throwing them into the vicious dieting cycle later on. There is something you can do—adopt a mindful approach to eating!



### What is mindful eating?

Mindful eating is a non-dieting approach to feed your inner hunger. It means deliberately paying attention to the food you eat in the present moment—on a mental, emotional, and physical level. It is also about learning to fully experience and savor the food you choose to eat. Eating with awareness is important because it is often the eating behaviors we are unaware of that lead to weight gain.

### three ways to be more mindful over Christmas

1. Create a safe environment—rid your cupboard and fridge of any junk food from before Christmas. Out of sight, out of mind!
2. Plan your meals so that you don't get stuck having to eat out. Remember to give yourself permission to include some favorite foods. Eat these slowly,

savoring every mouthful and using all your senses.

3. If you are likely to spend Christmas day alone, arrange for some nurturing activities that don't involve eating for the wrong reasons. Activities for single people might include buying yourself fresh flowers, watching a funny movie, and doing something kind for someone less fortunate. For example, volunteering to help at a soup kitchen for homeless people will take the focus off your loneliness, connect you with others, and give you a real buzz!

It is normal to overeat occasionally, but this should be done with awareness so you can compensate later. If you do have a setback over the festive season, remember it isn't the end of the world. You can always start over tomorrow. Setbacks should be viewed as learning experiences not failure.

Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and co-author of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See the latest at <http://www.sueradd.com>.