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Mindful Eating and a Healthy Lifestyle

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Mindful eating, in the most simple words is eating with full awareness and attention to what's on your plate and savouring every bite. Often we are in a hurry, or busy watching television and just gulp down the food, in giant sized bites mindlessly. Simply following the practise of 3 S's i.e sitting down, chewing the food slowly (32 times) and silently or mindfully. As kids you may have always heard your elders asking you to, chew your food 32 times! As I was researching more about this, it blew my mind to know that 70% of the digestion of carbs, which is our primary source of energy, happens in the mouth. So if we don't chew enough, the carbs don't get digested as they should and they fail to get energy from the meal, even though you may be eating the right type of food. Also, the saliva is slightly alkaline with a ph of just above 7, so whatever you chew goes into the stomach in a more alkaline state and the stomach wouldn't have to produce more acid. Chewing your food, mindfully would give you overall deep satisfaction. Nutrition and Health: Its quite surprising to know how much we eat in a day. It is around 2 kgs which goes through the opening we call the mouth. If you calculate, this rounds up to 60 kgs a month which is a tonne a year. The diet that helps us to reduce weight in the short run needs to be the same diet that creates and maintains health in the long run. We can control the cause. It is right at the end of our fork. Our whole quality of life is dependent on how and what we eat and nourish our body with. When you start eating mindfully, you would observe that these changes start happening on its own. You take time to observe what you are putting into your body and how it makes you feel, if you allow yourself to do so by switching off the television or staying away from the mobile phones while you eat your meal. Furthermore, discussing about the importance of Sleep. All healing of our body only happens in a state of complete rest. No matter how much organic food you grow or get the best treatment in the world but the body only heals and repairs itself in a state of complete rest i.e either through deep meditation or sleep. Sleep Deprivation makes you dumb! There is a liquid in our brain called the Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) which surrounds the brain, into many folds and flushes out toxins and unwanted substances. Amyloid beta is one particular toxic protein which accumulates in the brain. It is this protein that is responsible for degenerative brain diseases like Alzheimer's and needs to be eliminated. For example, make a fist and immerse it in water. Very little water will be able to seep in the fist. For the water to go inside, fingers need to loosen up, similarly for the CSF to reach deeper parts of brain and flush out toxins, it needs to reach deeper parts of brain. The space between tissues of our brain increases by 60% when we sleep, which allows the CSF to get inside and remove the trash. Sleep Deprivation makes you fat. There are two hormones called Leptin and Ghrelin which are known as hunger hormones. Leptin is manufactured by fat cells and decreases appetite. Ghrelin is the hormone which regulates our body weight and makes us feel hungry. Less sleep means less leptin and i.e more ghrelin and more hunger. Thus, sleeping less is also related to the incidence of obesity!

Keywords: Nutrition, Mindful Eating, Sleep, Hunger, Mindfulness.

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Biography:

Malvika Gupta is a aspiring Nutritionist currently in the second phase of my Masters. I'm also a Yoga and Meditation certified coach and have been teaching people through online classes, ever since the lockdown began. I am also a part time volunteer with the Art of Living organisation and organize and coordinate for the 'Youth Empowerment Seminars' and the 'Online Breath and Meditation Workshops', which are known to help people with stress management, life skills and general self help practises through yoga, pranayama and meditation. I have also volunteered with Teach for Change organisation, where we were required to teach spoken English to kids at the Government Schools. I have worked as a counselor at a 15 day rural camp with Voice4girls, and have also worked as a camp counselor at kids' adventure camps organised by Outlife. I've done a 20-Hour Yoga Intern (Common Yoga Protocol) training Program with the Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute (Lonavala). I have also done a certification on Sleep Health. I am currently working with my research, which is based on Mindful eating amongst various Fitness Practitioners. I strongly believe in this practise of mindful eating, ancient ayurvedic techniques, healing foods and lifestyle practises and also see myself helping my clients with the same approaches in the near future.