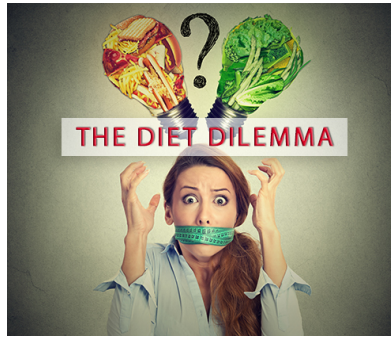


# Mental Strategies for Common Eating Dilemmas



<p>You tend to eat more when you dine with other people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Stop the diet talk. It isn't enjoyable to eat with others who are constantly discussing their latest diet, and it pushes your eating mates to promote all-or-nothing thinking (I.e. Live a little and have some dessert – we are having a good time.</li><li>- Look at the menu ahead of time when you are not hungry to assess the menu, and see if it is possible to make healthier substitutions.</li><li>- <b>Mindful eating</b> – have everyone describe what you see, taste, smell, touch and hear during their meal.</li></ul>
<p>Changing your eating habits make you feel like you are missing out and crabby</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Work on gratitude throughout the day (i.e. three things I am thankful for before eating)</li><li>- <b>Optimism visualization</b> – close your eyes and visualize yourself living the changes you want to make (i.e. See yourself taking one piece of chocolate from the box, closing the bag, and putting the bag back in the pantry, and walking away with confidence). Repeat several times a day. The image in your mind tells you that you have done this before and makes the actions easier to do in the future</li></ul>
<p>You want to give up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Positive self-talk</b> – “I can do this, change is difficult but possible, I have done harder things than this”</li><li>- Recall other difficult changes you have made in your life – i.e. Having children, quitting smoking, ending an unhealthy relationship, stick to an exercise program for a long time</li></ul>

<p>You want to stop snacking but find it difficult to stop even though you know you have eaten enough</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Impulse Control</b> – to shift from snacking to STOP, imagine driving a car looking at your speedometer. With that image in mind, ease your foot off the accelerator until the car comes stop a full stop. Mimic that deceleration as you come to a full stop with your snacking. Reach into your bag of chips <b>more slowly</b>, or <b>add time</b> (one minute, two minutes) between each chip</li> </ul>
<p>You experience all-or-nothing thinking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Flexibility</b> – Find the two extreme points in your decision (i.e. I can eat this whole milkshake or I cannot have this milkshake). Imagine those two end points on a line – one at the beginning of the line, one at the end. Find the middle point on that line. (I.e. I can drink half the milk shake). Identify two other points (i.e. I can drink 2/3 of the milkshake). Find other end points to remind yourself that you have more options than simply “I can have it all” or I can’t have it all.”</li> <li>* This strategy is also very helpful for thoughts of “I didn’t have the healthiest lunch, so my whole day is ruined”</li> </ul>
<p>You feel like you need a healthy eating plan but not sure which one to pick</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with a registered dietician</li> <li>- <b>Self-Awareness</b> – create a list of foods you love, write another list of foods that isn’t as important. Review the list and notice any patterns. If you love pasta, a no carb diet likely won’t work long term for you. Dismiss any plans that work against the food lists you created above. Look for a lifestyle plan, not a temporary restrictive diet that is not maintainable.</li> </ul>
<p>You want a small piece but you tend to have large portions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Mindful eating</b> – have everyone describe what you see, taste, smell, touch and hear during their meal experience.</li> <li>- Share an item with others</li> </ul>

\* Adapted from Albers, S. Eat Q.