

# Using Mindful Eating with GLP-1 Medications



A webinar with  
Megrette Fletcher,  
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# Disclosure to Participants

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## Notice of Requirements For Successful Completion

Please refer to learning goals and objectives

Learners must attend the full activity and complete the evaluation in order to claim continuing education credit/hours

## Conflict of Interest (COI) and Financial Relationship Disclosures

Megrette Fletcher, M.Ed, RDN, CDCES is the author of *Core Concepts of Mindful Eating*, *Discover Mindful Eating*, *Discover Mindful Eating for Kids*, and *Weight Neutral Diabetes Counseling and Education Activities*, and she receives royalties from Skelly Skills. She receives royalties from Am I Hungry, LLC. She is the owner of the free newsletter *Inclusive Diabetes Care* and the owner of *No Weight Loss Required*, a weight-inclusive newsletter for people trying to prevent or manage diabetes.

Sara Garbin is employed by Skelly Skills.

# About Megrette

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**Megrette Fletcher, M.Ed, RDN, CDCES** is a public speaker and author of five books, including *Diabetes Education and Counseling Activities* and *Core Concepts in Mindful Eating: Professional Edition*, *Discover Mindful Eating*, and *The Core Concepts of Mindful Eating*. She is a registered dietitian and diabetes care and education specialist. She currently works at Nourish and writes a newsletter called *No Weight Loss Required*, which is available on Substack. Megrette has maintained a daily meditation practice since 1999.



To learn more about Megrette, visit her website at [Megrette.com](https://Megrette.com).

# Learning Objectives

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At the conclusion of this webinar, the learner will be able to:

1. List the two types of glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) medications approved for weight loss
2. Describe the proposed mechanism of action for GLP-1s and glucose-dependent insulinotropic peptide (GIP) medications
3. Explain where GLP receptors are found
4. List three data points on efficacy outcomes of GLP-1s
5. List five main side effects of GLP-1s
6. Explain the relationship between GLP dose and side effects
7. Describe what mindful eating is and how it can be used to help optimize nutritional status and ameliorate side effects of GLP-1s
8. List three pieces of motivational interviewing (MI) dialogue to help assess the impact of a GLP-1 to inform counseling focus

# Meet Sarah

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She is considering starting a GLP-1 RA medication.



# Poll Question

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What could be the metabolic and endocrine reasons why a GLP-1 RA would be the best choice for Sarah?

- a) Pre-diabetes with BMI less than 30
- b) Renal disease
- c) Asthma
- d) Cosmetic reasons
- e) Diabetes

# FDA Approved

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- Diabetes
- Cardiovascular risk reduction
- Metabolic Dysfunction  
Associated Steatotic Liver  
Disease (MASLD)
- Sleep apnea
- Weight loss



(Sheth, K. et al., 2025; U.S. FDA, 2024)

# Non-Approved FDA Uses

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- Pre-diabetes with BMI <30
- PCOS
- Renal disease
- Cosmetic use



(Al-Qaaneh, A. M. et al., 2025; Boye, K. S. et al., 2018; Sasaki, T. et al., 2025; Śledziewska, A. M. et al., 2025; Yanto, T. A. et al., 2024)

Generic Name	Brand Name	Class	Route	Approved For
Semaglutide	Ozempic®	GLP-1	Injection	Type 2 Diabetes/CVA
Semaglutide	Wegovy®	GLP-1	Injection	Weight loss, <b>MASLD/MASH</b>
Semaglutide	Rybelsus®	GLP-1	Oral	Type 2 Diabetes
Tirzepatide	Mounjaro®	GIP/GLP-1	Injection	Type 2 Diabetes
Tirzepatide	Zepbound®	GIP/GLP-1	Injection	Weight loss/ <b>Sleep Apnea</b>
Liraglutide	Victoza®	GLP-1	Injection	Type 2 Diabetes/CVA
Liraglutide	Saxenda®	GLP-1	Injection	Weight loss
Dulaglutide	Trulicity®	GLP-1	Injection	Type 2 Diabetes/CVA
Exenatide	Byetta®	GLP-1	Injection	Type 2 Diabetes
Exenatide	Bydureon®	GLP-1	Injection	Type 2 Diabetes
Lixisenatide	Adlyxin®	GLP-1	Injection	Type 2 Diabetes
Orforglipron	—	GLP-1 (in development)	Oral	T2DM/Obesity (trial phase)

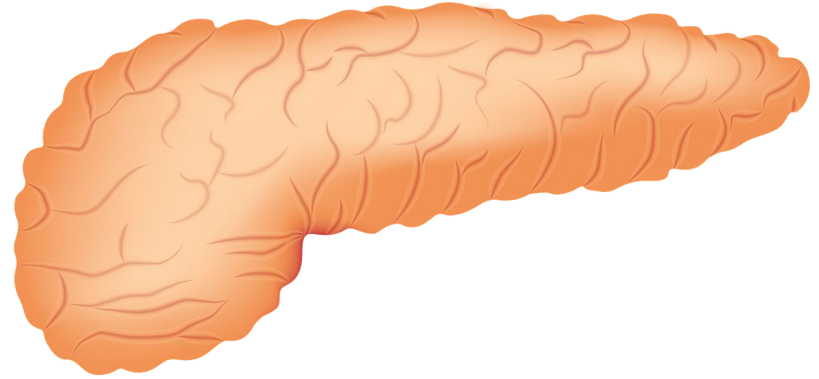
# Where are GLP-1 receptors found in the body?

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GLP-1 receptors (GLP-1 R) are found in a variety of tissues throughout the body, with distribution confirmed by advanced molecular & imaging techniques

- Pancreas
- Brain & nervous system
- Gastrointestinal tract
- Cardiovascular system
- Kidneys
- Other tissues (low or controversial expression)

GLP-1 receptors are especially concentrated in the pancreas (beta-cells), brain, select gut neurons & immune cells, heart, certain blood vessels, & some kidney vascular cells, supporting both metabolic & non-metabolic effects across multiple organ systems.



(McLean et al., 2021)

# GLP-1 RA Medications Are Not Just for Weight Loss

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GLP-1 RAs are approved for:

- Diabetes
- Cardiovascular risk reduction
- Metabolic Dysfunction Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD)
- Sleep apnea
- Weight loss

The dose of these medications vary & the outcomes being measured are not exclusive to weight change.

They can include:

- A1C or Time in Range (TIR)
- Cholesterol/lipid panel
- Liver enzymes/imaging
- Apnea-Hypopnea Index & oxygen saturation

(Blackman et al., 2016; Loomba et al., 2024; Malhotra et al., 2024; Marso et al., 2016; Newsome et al., 2021; Wilding et al., 2021)

# Diagnosis-Specific Doses of GLP-1 RA Medication

Drug	Indication	Dose (Once Weekly)	Titration
Wegovy	MASH, weight loss, CV risk	2.4 mg	0.25 → 0.5 → 1 → 1.7 → 2.4 mg
Ozempic	Type 2 diabetes, CV risk	0.5–2 mg	0.25 mg x4wk, then up to 0.5/1/2 mg
Zepbound	Weight loss	5–15 mg	2.5 → 5 → 7.5 → 10 → 12.5 → 15 mg
Zepbound	Sleep apnea	10 or 15 mg	2.5 mg increments every 4 weeks

Wegovy doses (Wilding et al., 2021), Ozempic doses (Marso et al., 2016), Zepbound doses (Jastreboff et al., 2022; Malhotra et al., 2024)



# Explaining How GLP-1 RA Medications Work

# Insulin Production

- Insulin acts as a “knife” to help cut up glucose, making it easier for the body’s cells to use it as energy.
- When the body doesn’t make enough insulin, **the “knife” isn’t big enough to handle the job**
  - this often happens after years of insulin resistance, once the pancreas becomes tired.
- Medications like **GLP-1 RAs make a bigger knife** by helping the pancreas produce more insulin.

THE INSULIN KNIFE:

HOW BIG?



HOW SHARP?



HOW MUCH WORK



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www.megrette.com

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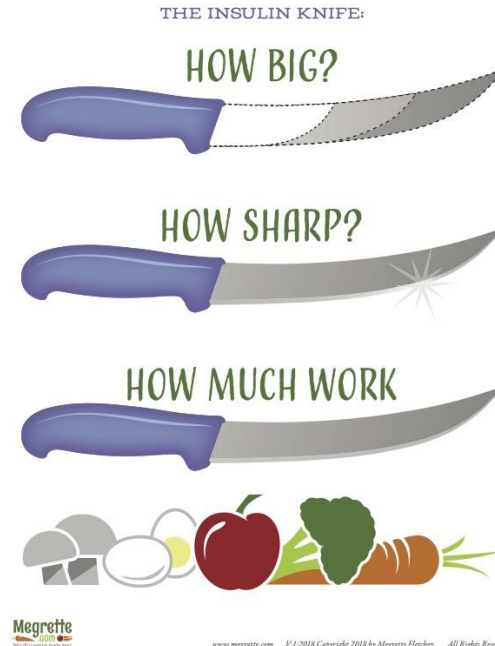
(Fletcher, M., 2018/2023)

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# Insulin Resistance Analogy: A Dull Knife

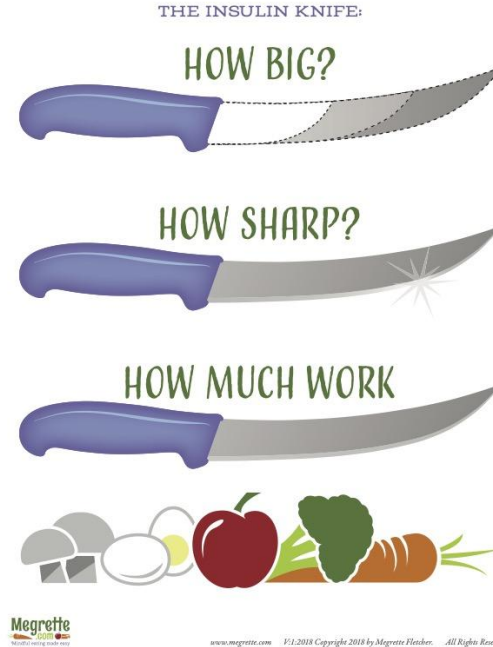
- Early in the process, it's not the size but the sharpness of the insulin knife that matters: **insulin resistance means the insulin knife is too dull to work well.**
- Some people are born with “dull knives,” so insulin resistance & energy imbalance can appear even without weight changes.
- Lifestyle factors: A diet high in saturated fat, limited activity, poor sleep, stress, environmental exposures can also dull the insulin knife.



(Fletcher, M., 2018/2023)

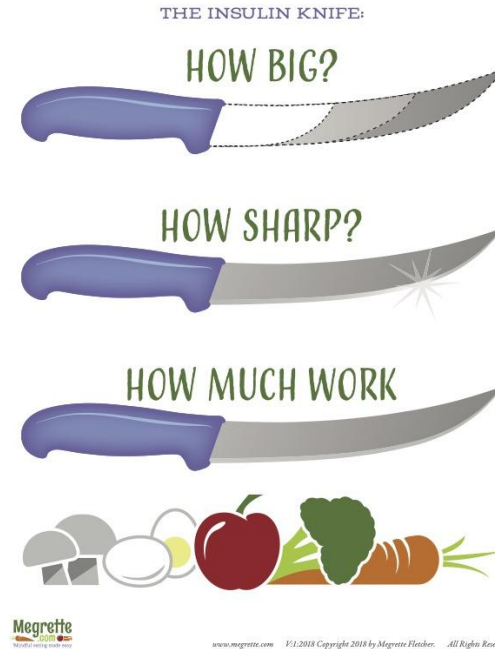
# Insulin Resistance: Inflammation

- When the “knife” gets dull, the body tries to compensate by making more knives (producing more insulin), but this can cause more clutter, fatigue, & inflammation over time.
- If glucose can’t move from the blood into your cells, the cells lack fuel, creating fatigue.
- **High levels of insulin in the body is linked with other health conditions including heart disease, MASLD, inflammation, & weight gain.**



# Lifestyle Changes: How Much Work

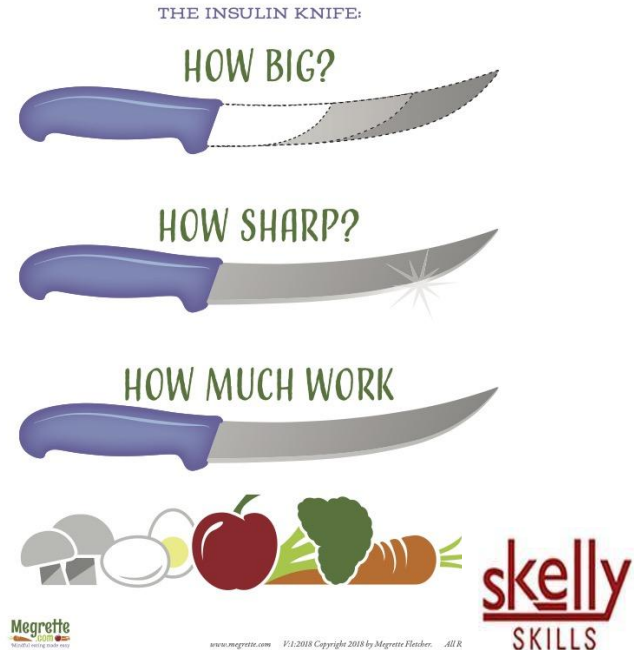
- The total amount of carbohydrates & protein impact workload. IE: 180 vs 90
- Pairing of macronutrients impacts workload. IE: Carbs + Protein
- Distribution & meal size impacts workload. IE: Eating 1 or 5 small meals a day.
- The amount of fiber (which delays gastric emptying) impacts workload. IE: Eating a diet higher in fiber & lower in processed foods.



(Fletcher, M., 2018/2023)

# How GLP-1 RAs Help

- GLP-1 RAs stimulate insulin production, preserving the size of the insulin knife.
- GLP-1 RAs ↓ insulin resistance, keeping the insulin knife sharp. Less insulin resistance improves the body's function (referred to as insulin signaling)
- GLP-1 RAs impact appetite, & non-hunger eating, ↓ the work for the smaller, duller knife.
- GLP-1 RAs can ↓ inflammation, ↓ variables associated with chronic illness & may make it easier for individuals to move & engage in consistent activity, which keeps the insulin knife sharp, & ↓ workload.



(Fletcher, M., 2018/2023)

# Poll Question

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Approximately how many clients have you worked with who are using a GLP-1 RA for weight loss?

- a) 0 to 10
- b) 10 to 30
- c) 30 to 60
- d) 60 or more



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# GLP-1 RA Side Effects & Outcomes

# GLP-1 RAs: Common Side Effects & Considerations

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- Nausea, constipation, diarrhea, bloating, fatigue. This is usually mild and improves over time.
- Reported adverse GI events range from 40-70% of treated patients

## Emotional & Mental Health Effects

- Possible increased anxiety, irritability
- Rare reports of suicidal thoughts (under FDA review)



(Gorgojo Martínez, J. J., 2025; Jastreboff, A. M. et al., 2022; Mozaffarian et al., 2025; Wharton, 2023)

# GLP-1 RAs: Common Side Effects & Considerations (Cont.)

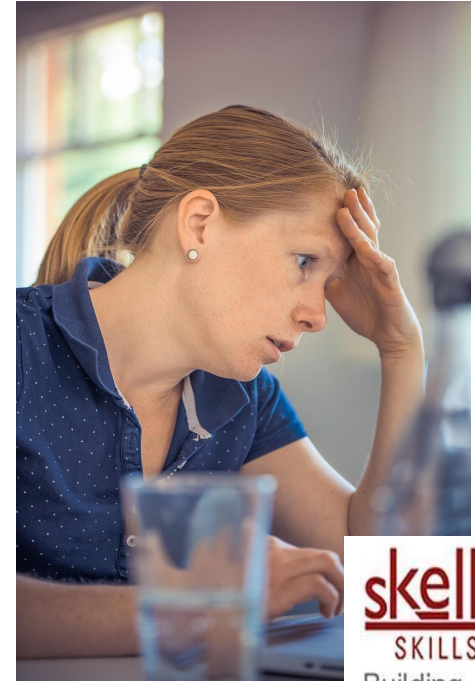
## Appetite & Eating Behavior

- Appetite suppression can lead individuals to forget to eat.
- Risk of triggering or worsening disordered eating for those with prior patterns
- Food avoidance & loss of enjoyment can increase isolation and depression due to disconnection from social and cultural aspects of eating

## Serious but Less Common Side Effects

- Pancreatitis, gallbladder issues, severe vomiting, gastroparesis (delayed stomach emptying)

**Use your comment box to tell us other side effects**



(Jastreboff, A. M. et al., 2022;  
Mozaffarian et al., 2025)

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# Considerations of GLP-1 RA Medications

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- **Lean muscle mass loss:** A systematic review of 6 studies of semaglutide showed lean-mass reductions ranging from **almost 0% up to appx 40% of total weight loss**
- Overall estimates suggest **10-15% of wt loss in females & 20-25% in males** on GLP-1 RAs comes from muscle loss
- **Semaglutide Treatment Effect in People with Obesity (STEP 1 trial):** randomized trial assessed efficacy & safety of weekly subcutaneous semaglutide injections for overweight/obesity management over 68 weeks
  - 86% of participants achieved weight reductions of 5% or more
  - Substudy of 140 participants assessed body composition
    - Group participants lost appx 15% of body weight, with appx 19.3% ↓ in total fat mass, appx 27.4% ↓ in regional visceral fat mass & appx 9.7% ↓ in lean body mass. Total lean body mass relative to total body mass ↑ by 3%, showing an **improvement in lean body mass: fat mass ratio.**

(Anyiam et al., 2025; Bikou A. et al., 2024; Mechanick, J. I. et al., 2025; Mozaffarian et al., 2025; Neeland, I. J. et al., 2024; Prado, C. M. et al., 2018, 2022; Wilding, J. P. H. et al., 2021a, 2021b)

# Considerations of GLP-1 RA Medications (Cont.)

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- **Lean muscle mass loss** can lead to weight cycling & ↓ functional & metabolic health
- **Weight cycling:**
  - Weight regain after ending treatment may be disproportionately composed of adipose tissue, which is less metabolically active, leading to reduced energy expenditure → contributes to weight cycling
  - More common in young & middle-aged women
  - Severe weight cycling associated with ↑ risk of muscle loss & sarcopenic obesity
- **Sarcopenic obesity:** reduced fat-free mass with excess adiposity

(Anyiam et al., 2025; Bays, H. E. et al, 2022; Donini, L. M. et al., 2022; Mechanick, J. I. et al., 2025; Mozaffarian et al., 2025; Neeland, I. J. et al., 2024; Pellegrini, M. et al., 2022; Rossi, A. P. et al., 2019; Wilding, J. P. H. et al., 2021a, 2021b)

# Considerations of GLP-1 RA Medications (Cont.)

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- **Higher Risk in Older Adults and Chronic Disease:** Older adults with type 2 diabetes, chronic kidney disease, liver disease, and other comorbidities are particularly at risk for muscle loss when using GLP-1 RAs. ***Sarcopenia prevalence is higher in elderly patients with diabetes, making this a critical population for monitoring.***
- **Impact on Muscle Strength and Function:** While GLP-1 RAs like semaglutide may initially improve muscle function by reducing intramuscular fat infiltration, long-term use has been associated with gradual muscle mass loss that can diminish these functional gains.

(Anyiam et al., 2025; Ceasovschih, A. et al., 2025; Gigliotti, L. et al., 2025; Mozaffarian et al., 2025; Yuan & Larsson, 2023)

# GLP-1 RA Medications: Individualized Nutrition Recommendations

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- **Individual Variability and Need for Intervention:** Baseline muscle mass and physical activity levels are important predictors of muscle loss risk. Resistance training and optimized protein intake may help mitigate sarcopenia risks during GLP-1 RA therapy.
- **Heterogeneity of Effects:** Clinical trials report variable effects of GLP-1 therapies on lean body mass changes, suggesting that patient-specific factors influence outcomes.
- **Sarcopenia vs. Frailty:** Some studies indicate that despite weight loss-induced muscle mass reduction, there is no strong evidence linking GLP-1–based medications to physical frailty or sarcopenia severe enough to cause disability, providing some reassurance.

(Ceasovschih, A. et al., 2025; Jiao, R. et al., 2025; Mozaffarian et al., 2025; Mechanick, J. I. et al., 2025; Memel, Z. et al., 2025; Scheen A. J., 2025)



# What is Mindful Eating?

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# What is Mindful Eating Anyway?

- Think of mindfulness as a mental spotlight.
- Most times the spotlight is shining on the past, or the future.
- Mindful eating is about becoming aware of your direct experience in the present moment.

(Fletcher, M., 2019)

## JUST WHAT IS MINDFUL EATING, ANYWAY?

One way to understand mindful eating is to imagine *your* awareness as a spotlight. The spotlight represents where your mind *really* is at any given moment.

When you brush your teeth in the morning, your spotlight of your consciousness may be, at least at first, on the act of brushing your teeth. Soon, however, the spotlight moves on—now you're thinking about the day ahead and how you will get everything in. During this time, your spotlight is shining on the future as you imagine it. Perhaps next you comb your hair. The spotlight shifts to your head, but only for a moment. Then, you're off thinking about the checks that you have to write today.

All day long, in fact, your spotlight moves and shifts, shining here and there.

Sometimes it's in the present. Often, though, it's in the past or future, shining on some problem, concern, fantasy, worry or idle thought.

Through all of this, you have the rather remarkable ability to bring your spotlight back to the present for just a second every once in a while. For example, that's how you can drive to work and get there safely but never remember a thing about it.

During meals, our spotlights shine far and away. Rarely do we bring our spotlights to rest on the food itself, genuinely turning our attention to it.

Mindful eating, however, asks you to bring your spotlight of awareness to front-and-center stage: on food and the act of eating. This mindfulness can play a huge role in changing the way you approach, enjoy, honor and relate to food.

### Where is Your Spotlight When You Eat?

Find out if your spotlight is on your eating! Check off the ones that apply to you.

- I am fully aware that I have food in my mouth as I eat.
- I enjoy the flavor of my food.
- I notice the texture of my food.
- I notice the sound my food makes when I chew it.
- I notice how the flavors of my food change as I eat it.
- I notice the aftertastes of my food.
- I think about the source of the food I eat.
- I think about the great sacrifice of the animal or plant that supplied me with something to eat.
- I think about the efforts of all the people who worked to bring me food as I eat the food.
- I pay attention to the actions of my lips, teeth, jaws and tongue as I eat a bite of food.

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# Just What is Mindful Eating, Anyway? Questions

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- I am fully aware that I have food in my mouth as I eat.
  - I enjoy the flavor of my food.
  - I notice the texture of my food.
  - I notice the sound my food makes when I chew it.
  - I notice how the flavors of my food change as I eat it.
- I notice the aftertastes of my food
  - I think about the source of the food I eat.
  - I think about the great sacrifice of the animal or plant that supplied me with something to eat.
  - I think about the efforts of all the people who worked to bring me food as I eat the food.
  - I pay attention to the actions of my lips, teeth, jaws and tongue as I eat a bite of food.

(Fletcher, M., 2019)

# Using Motivational Interviewing & Mindful Eating

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- Eating is hard because of the nausea, so it is easier to eat quickly but that only makes it worse.
- You want to notice the flavor when eating but your lack of appetite feels like a barrier.
- You are thinking about the type/source of the food you eat and you're getting curious how to ... (reduce, decrease, increase XYZ)
- A lot of people worked to bring you this food and you don't want to waste it.
- The wish is to be more aware when you're eating but you aren't sure how to slow down with such a busy life.
- In the past eating was used to escape feelings. Now you want eating to be more enjoyable.
- It is hard to notice the taste and texture of the bite when you have always been focused on losing weight..

(Fletcher, M., 2019; Miller & Rollnick, 2023)

# Measuring Progress

- Mindful eating is about remaining present, instead of getting pulled in to the past or future.
- This handout is trying to understand your client's direct experience by creating a complex reflection.
- This handout could be used to paint a picture of what eating mindfully might look like.

(Fletcher, M., 2019)

## MEASURING PROGRESS

Mindful eating is a process of discovery that continues throughout your entire life. From time to time, it's nice to take a look at where you are, where you were and how far you've come.

On the diagram below, put an X on each line that indicates where you are today. Use an ink pen to make your X's.

Then, put a pencil mark where you'd like to be the next time you visit this diagram.

On later visits to this handout, use a different ink color!

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
I don't think about food; I just react to it.											I am aware that food is a choice I make.
I stop eating when the food runs out.											I'm aware of how much food my body needs.
Typically I eat more when I am emotionally upset or happy.											Typically my emotions don't override my fullness cue to stop eating.
I eat very rapidly.											I eat at a comfortable pace.
I use food for all sorts of things other than nutrition.											I use food for nutrition and health.
During meals, my mind is on all sorts of things.											During meals, my mind is on food and act of eating.
I eat out of habit.											I eat out of choice.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

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# The *Measuring Progress* Handout

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- I don't think about food; I just react to it. → I am aware that food is a choice I make.
- I stop eating when the food runs out. → I'm aware of how much food my body needs.
- Typically I eat more when I am emotionally upset or happy. → Typically my emotions don't override my fullness cue to stop eating.
- I eat very rapidly. → I eat at a comfortable pace.
- I use food for all sorts of things other than nutrition. → I use food for nutrition and health.
- During meals, my mind is on all sorts of things. → During meals, my mind is on food and the act of eating.
- I eat out of habit. → I eat out of choice.

# Using MI for this Handout

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Using MI is about pulling for the desired change.

- *You want to be more aware of the food choices you make.*
- *Eating with more awareness would help you change your diet.*
- *You want to know how much food your body needs.*
- *You want to eat at a comfortable pace.*
- *You want to choose foods that nourish and support health.*

# Hunger and Fullness (H/F) Scale



This scale is curious about the client's direct experience vs recognizing a specific sense of hunger or fullness

(Fletcher, M., 2019)

# How to Introduce H/F Scale

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Ask the client to look at the H/F scale. “What do you notice?”

- The scale is mirrored meaning that it is the mirror image of each side.
- Hunger decreases with each bite.
- Fullness increases with each bite.
- The colors change with the change in experience.
- The scale is focusing on the client’s comfort/discomfort not on a specific sensation of hunger or fullness.

# Mindful Eating

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- It helps redirect the client to the present moment where change is possible.
- Is something that you practice. It isn't something that is 'done.'
- Can be used to clarify the client's 'dream' which is often clouded by judgment, diet culture and the desire to be right vs engage in self-kindness.
- Can help you reflect the desire and or conflict they are facing (reflection)
- Can help the client refocus on their experience vs an outcome.

(Fletcher, M., 2019)

# Case Study: Amber

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Amber was a grade school teacher who was trying a GLP-1 RA to lose weight. She also wanted to address her relationship with food.

To do this, Amber started to log her meals using a tool that the RD/RDN could see.

This app allowed Amber to rate her hunger and fullness, as well as provide some free-text comments.



# Amber

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Amber was not clear on what hunger and fullness were, and wanted to start with writing down her ‘why.’. Why was she eating? Why did she choose this food?

Amber started with and became clear on her intention, her “Why”

The more Amber, ‘checked in’ prior to meals with her intention, the more insight she gained.

This insight also increased her motivation.

She was able to recognize the following reasons why she was eating.

# Amber

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- Didn't want to waste food if the food was free
- Wanted to use up leftovers
- Was bored, upset, lonely
- If it was in the house (food noise)
- If she liked the taste (cravings)
- If she wanted to nourish her body
- If she thought that the food would feel good in her body (nausea)
- If she wanted to feel more energy after eating
- If she wanted to eat/cook something new



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# Amber

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- The more curious Amber was about her **why**, the more curious Amber was about *Amber*.
- After writing down her “Why” (which was something she did when logging food) Amber also wanted to not ‘overeat’ *because it didn’t feel good in her body*.
- Her **Why** wasn’t because she can’t or wasn’t allowed. It wasn’t because she can “only” have X number of calories.
- *Amber’s intention was to enjoy eating*. We focused on eating balanced meals (3 colors, 3 textures) The more she looked at her why, the clearer it became that overeating decreased her enjoyment.



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# Case Study: Nick

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- Nick is a social worker who is on a GLP-1 RA for diabetes and to lose weight but realizes that his relationship with food also needs to change.
- Nick started on the GLP-1 RA and felt that he had no understanding of hunger or fullness.



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# Nick

- Used the H/F scale (see image)
- The H/F scale was used to explain that taking GLPs often decrease the sensation of hunger and increase the sensation of fullness.
- Being able to notice a comfortable level of hunger and respond is a skill that has many benefits.
- Including: being able to adjust your portions and decrease the intake of saturated fat, which improves insulin resistance and glucose levels.



# Nick

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- He could see that he was eating specific foods and amounts out of habit.
- He became more aware of his fullness and realized that he didn't need to be 'that' full because his hunger was so much less than previous.
- Nick wasn't interested in understanding his deeper motives. Instead, Nick realized that he needed to eat more often because he got full so fast there was no way for him to meet his nutritional goals.
  - Specifically protein which was >120 g per day and fiber 35 g
- He noticed when he ate a lot of meat, he couldn't get his fiber needs met.

# Summary

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- There is a varied mechanism of action for GLP-1 RAs and GIPs
- GLP receptors are found in many places in the body
- Long-term efficacy for weight loss is unknown
- The 5 main side effects of GLP-1 RAs: Nausea, constipation, diarrhea, bloating, fatigue
- GLP dose can change due to dx it is used for or to reduce side effects
- Mindful eating can be used to help optimize nutritional status and ameliorate side effects of GLP-1 RAs by helping clients notice their direct experience, to increase intrinsic motivation, and increase food enjoyment.
- Mindful eating can also be used to create effective MI reflections and open-ended questions to facilitate effective counseling.

(Fletcher, M., 2019; Mozaffarian et al., 2025; Gorgojo-Martínez et al., 2023)

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# Questions?

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