

Summerville FHT
Dietitians

NOURISH TO FLOURISH

Christabel Menezes and Joanne Bak
March 4th 2026



AGENDA

- **Malnutrition: what is under/over nutrition**
- **Unintentional weight loss & weight gain**
- **Mindful eating and cravings**
- **Nutrition by addition**
- **Q&A**

LEARNING GOALS

- **Understand components of balanced meals and their role in our health.**
- **Learn strategies to build healthy meals to prevent overnutrition and undernutrition.**
- **Understand food cravings and management techniques.**
- **Build enjoyable meals and snacks that combine food groups for energy, satiety, and nutrient density.**

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

**I often experience challenges with the following:
(Choose all the apply)**

- a. lack of interest, time or ability to prepare nutritious meals**
- b. eat too little or lack of appetite**
- c. eating too much**
- d. managing food cravings**
- e. none of the above**

MALNUTRITION

Malnutrition refers to deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients.

WHO 2025



Undernutrition

Overnutrition

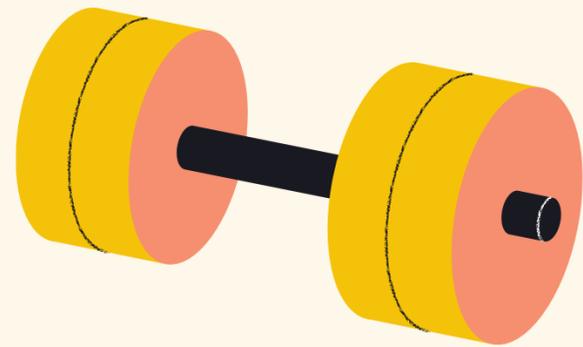
1 in 3 older adults are on the cusp of malnutrition in Canada.

WEIGHT CHANGES

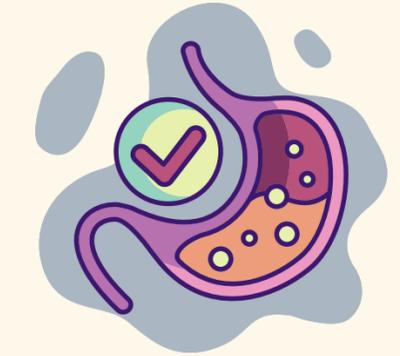
- BMI is not the best tool to measure health and weight, especially for older adults
- Maintaining muscle mass is more important than weight and BMI does not capture this well
- Extra weight is protective!
- Be mindful of significant weight changes instead

Category	BMI For Adults 18-64	BMI for Adults 65+
Underweight	<18.5	<23
Normal weight	18.5-24.9	23-30
Overweight	>25	>30

WHY IS HEALTHY EATING IMPORTANT?



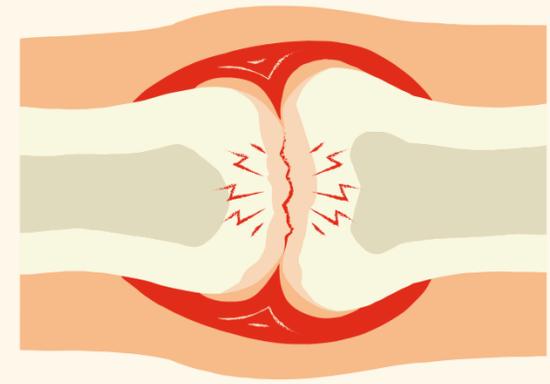
Helps maintain muscle and strength



Improves energy, digestion, and mood



Maintain independence



Supports bone health and immunity



Helps prevent malnutrition

MEAL BUILDER

Have plenty of
vegetables and fruits

Eat protein foods

Make water
your drink
of choice



Fruits and Veggies:

- Vitamins and minerals
- Hydration
- Antioxidants
- Fibre

Protein rich foods:

- Builds, repairs, and maintains body tissues
- Maintains muscles
- Supports immunity

Whole Grains:

- Best source of energy
- Fibre
- Vitamins and minerals

Choose
whole grain
foods

MEAL BUILDER



Vegetables:

- Lettuce
- Corn
- Salsa

Whole Grains:

- Corn tortilla shells

Protein foods:

- Beef strips

MEAL BUILDER



What's Missing?

Protein:

- Fish curry

Whole Grains:

- Whole wheat roti

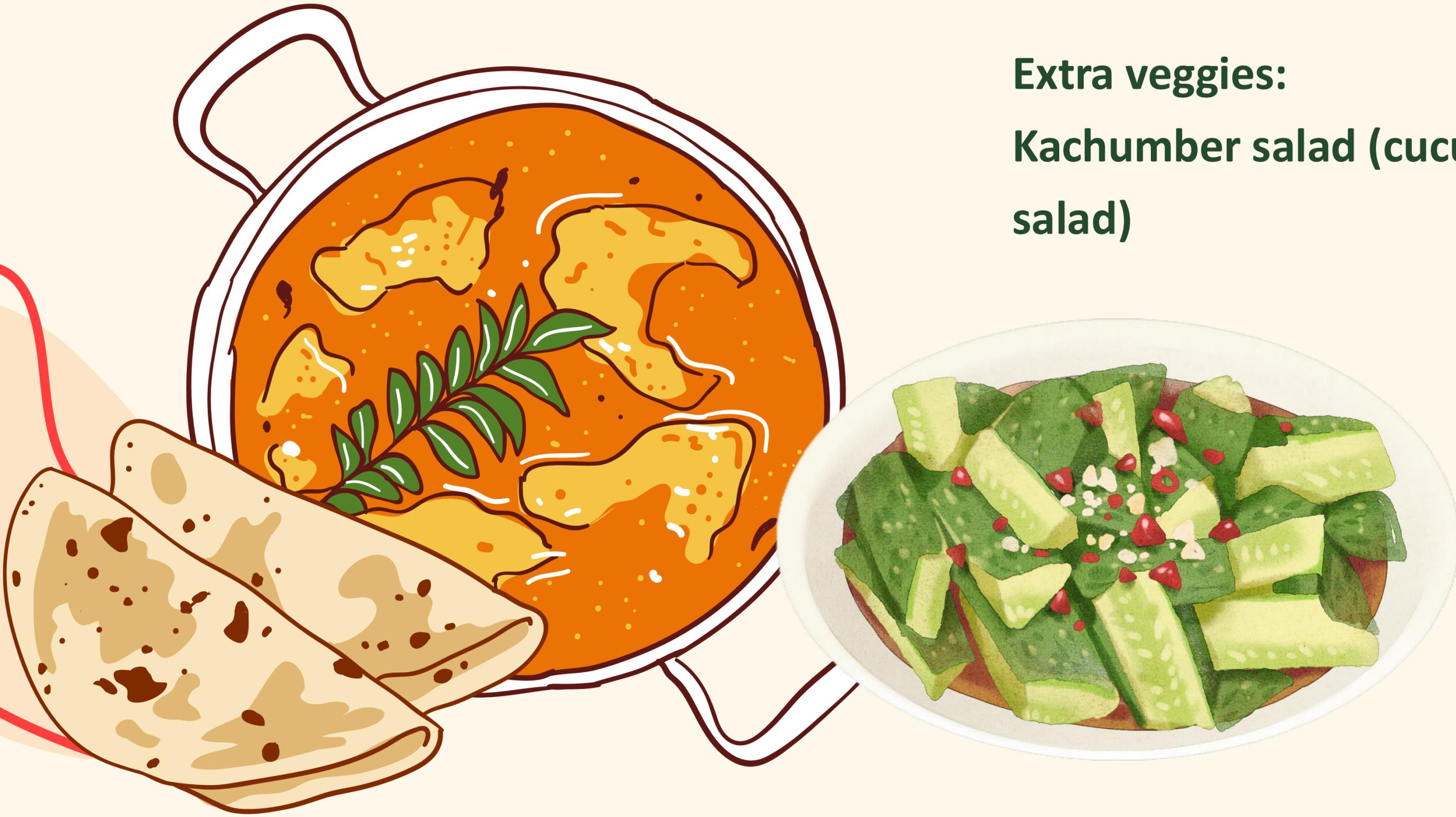
Vegetables:

- Tomato/onion base in
curry

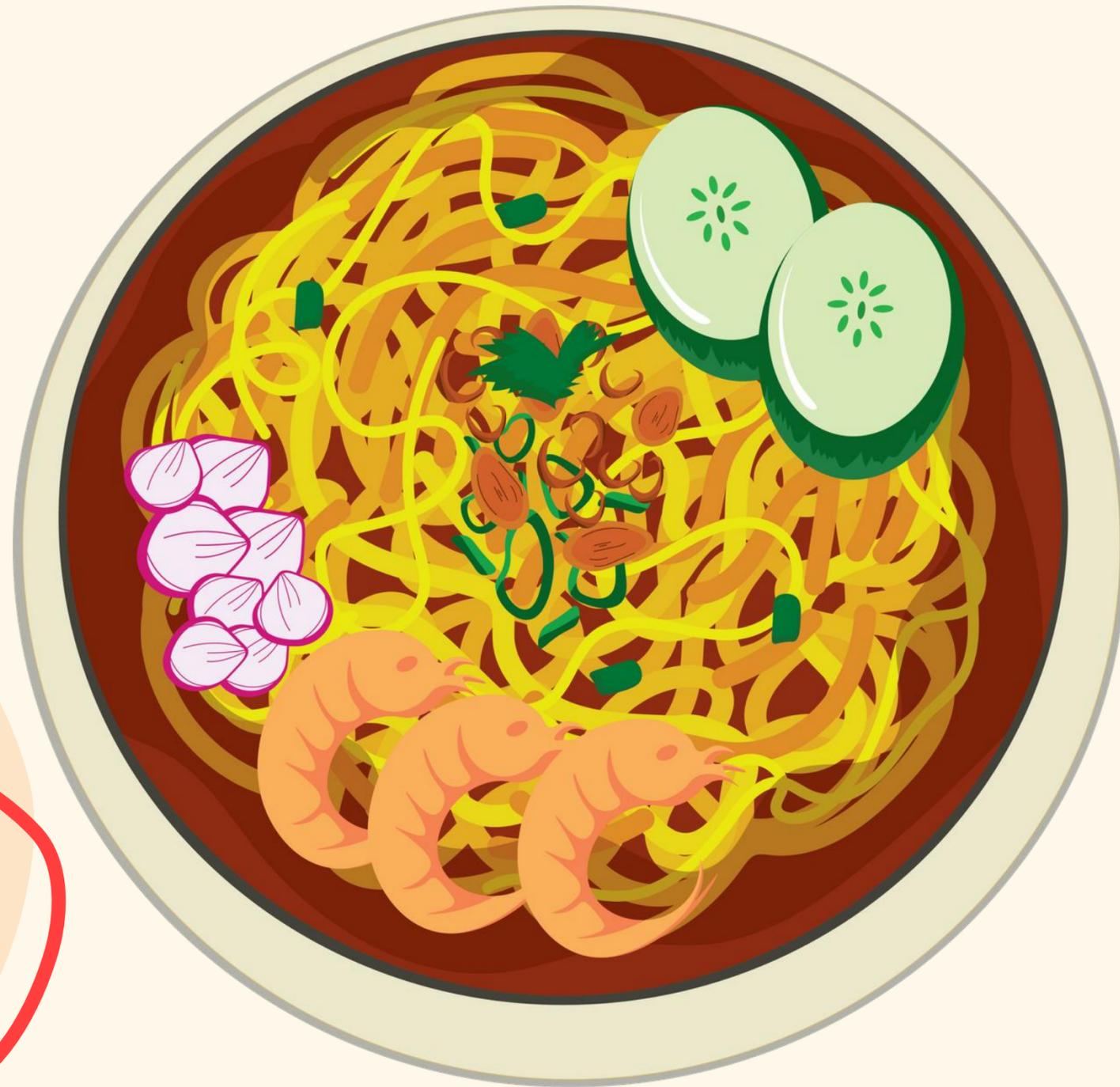
MEAL BUILDER

Extra veggies:

**Kachumber salad (cucumber
salad)**



MEAL BUILDER



What's Missing?

Protein:

- Shrimp

Whole Grains:

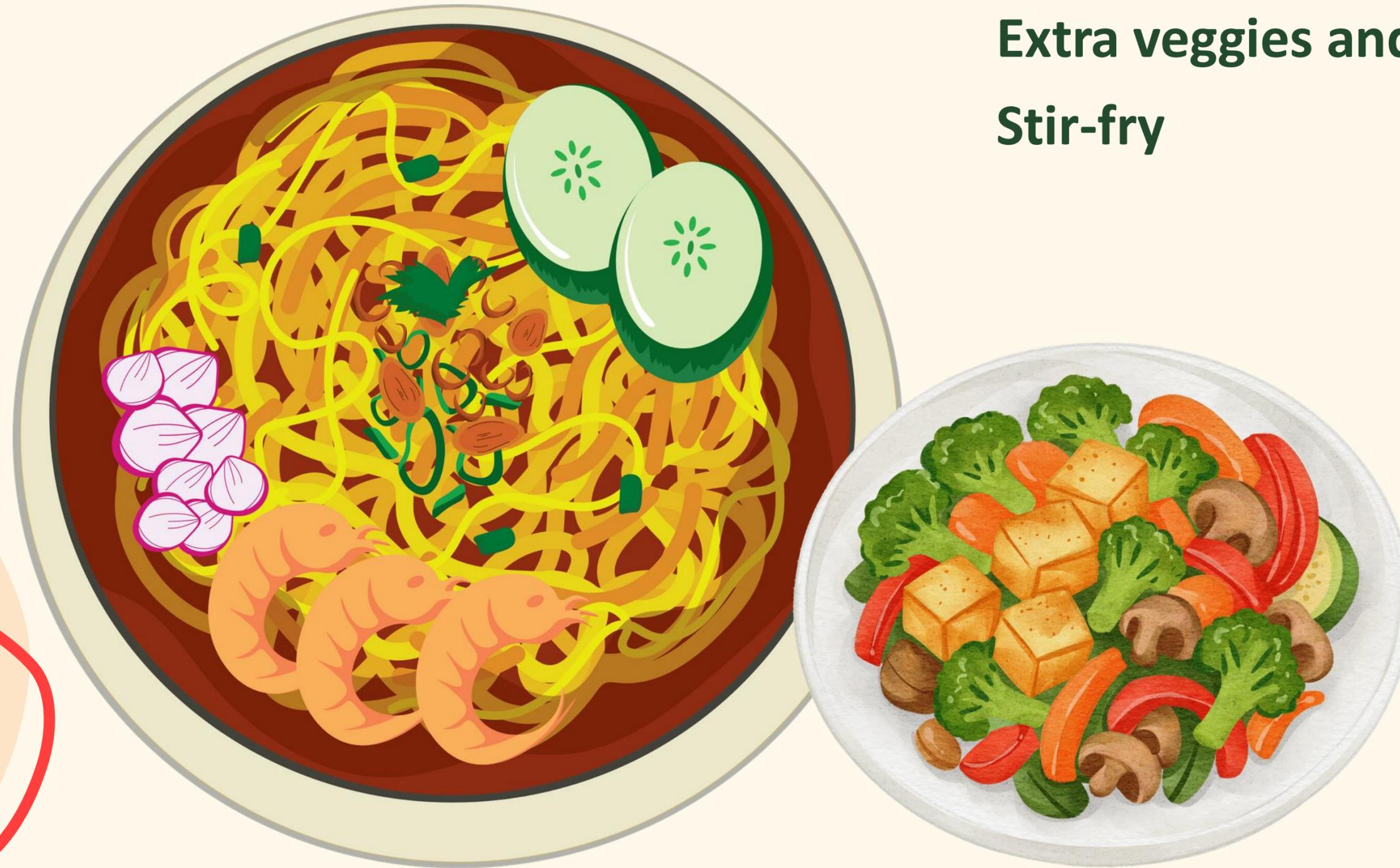
- Whole wheat noodles

Vegetables:

- Cucumbers and radish

MEAL BUILDER

**Extra veggies and protein:
Stir-fry**



MEAL BUILDER

What's Missing?

Protein:

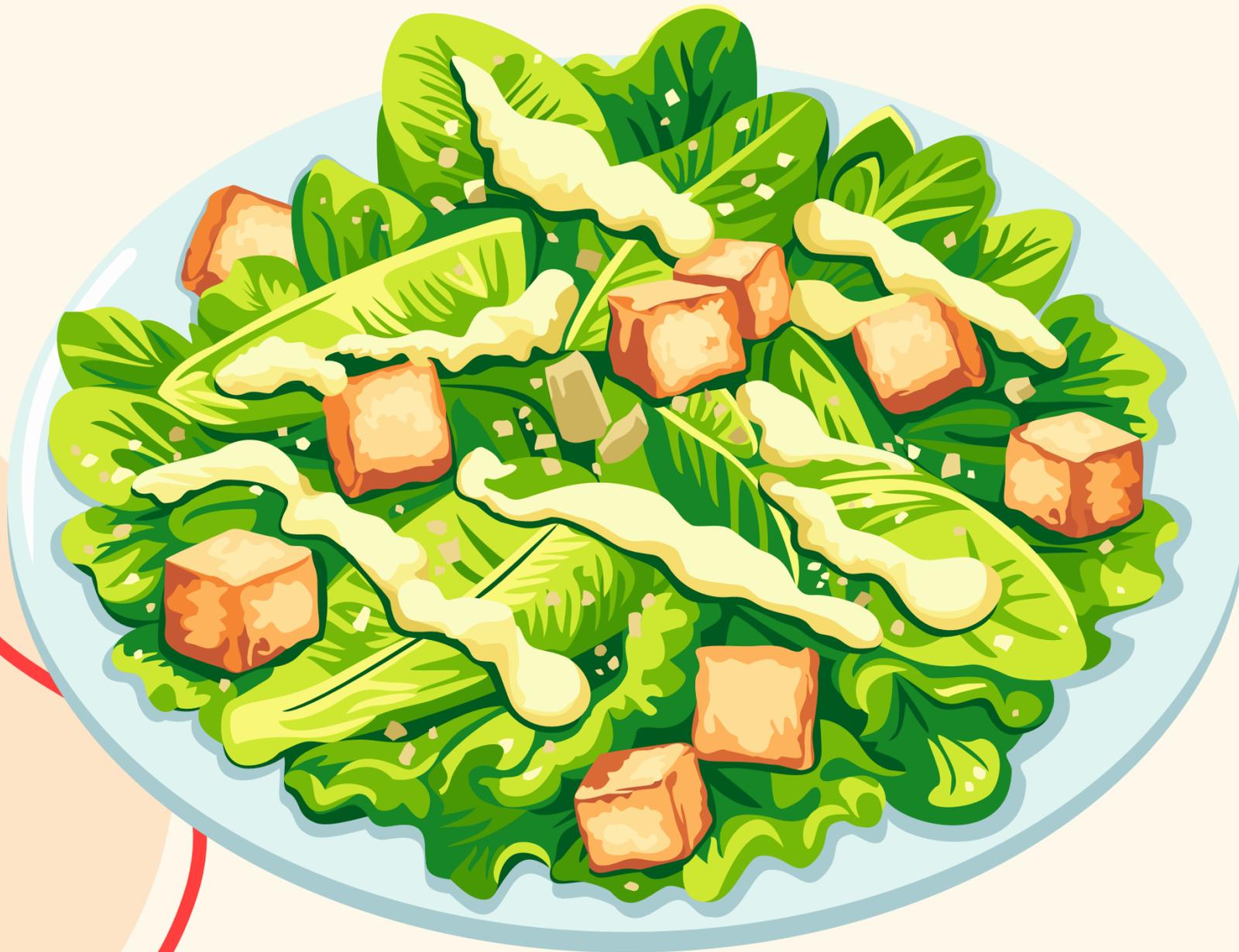
- Parmesan in dressing

Whole Grains:

- Whole wheat croutons

Vegetables:

- Lettuce leaves



MEAL BUILDER

Extra protein:
Grilled chicken breast





Do I feel hungry after meals?

Do I skip breakfast on a regular basis?

Am I exercising today?

Is my appetite low?

DO I NEED A SNACK?

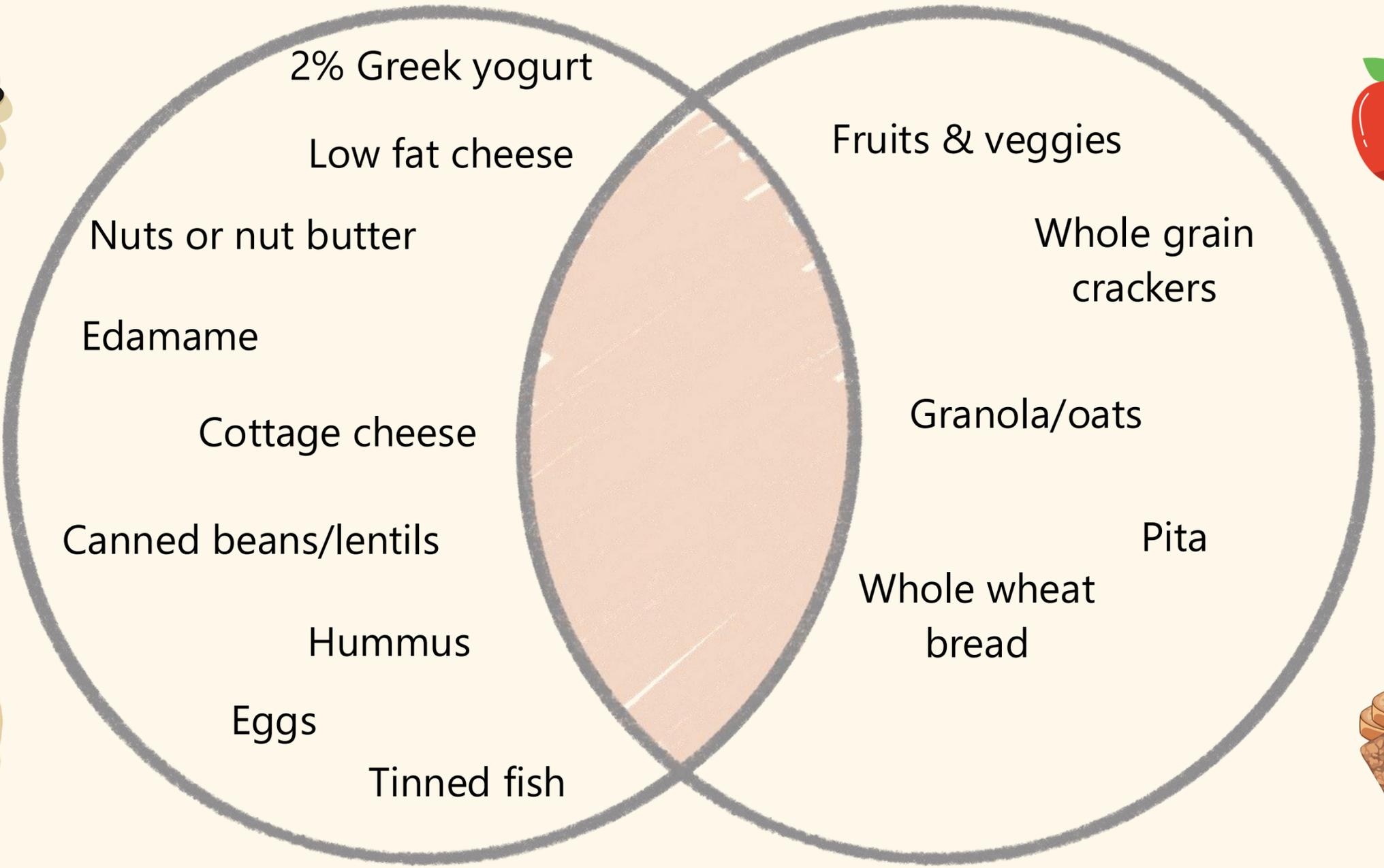
Am I taking medications that should be taken with food?

Am I trying to maintain or gain weight?

Is it challenging to prepare meals?

Do I feel low energy?

SNACK BUILDER

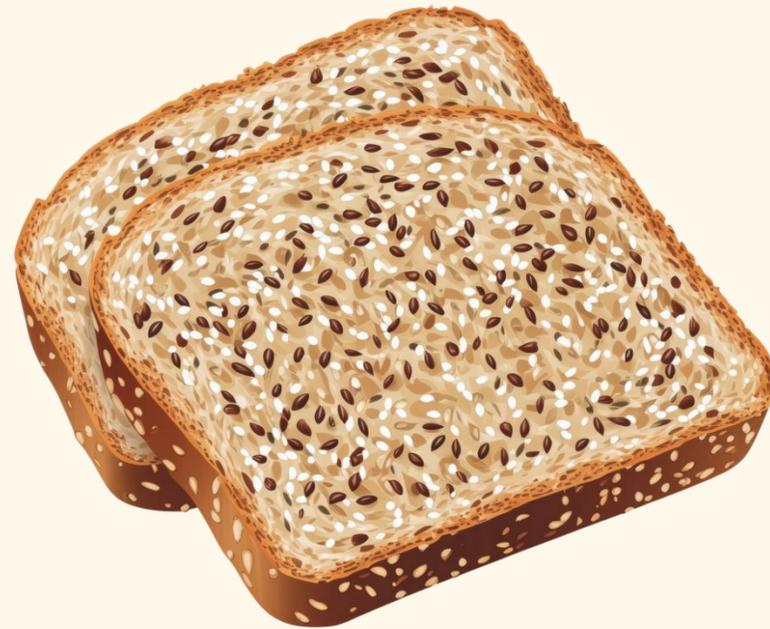


Lean Protein + Fibre Rich Carbohydrate

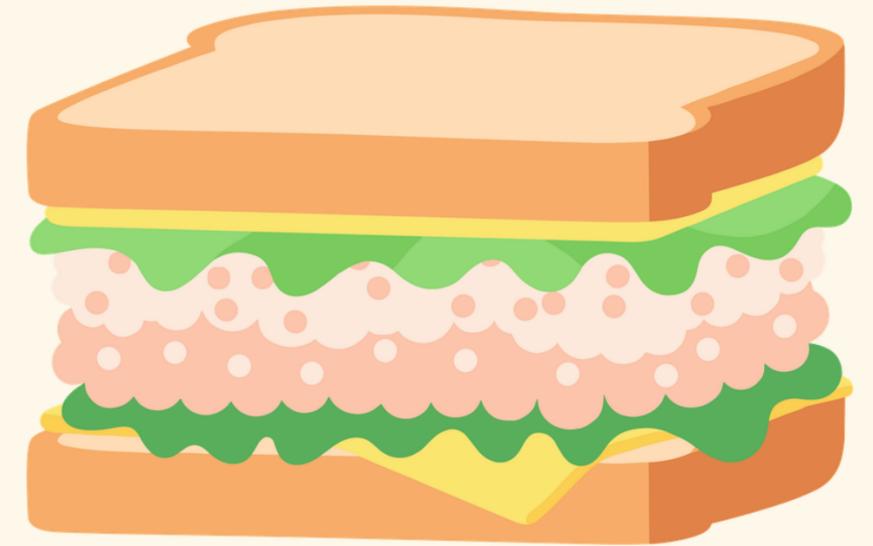
SNACK BUILDER



+



=



Lean Protein + Fibre Rich Carbohydrate

SNACK BUILDER



+



=

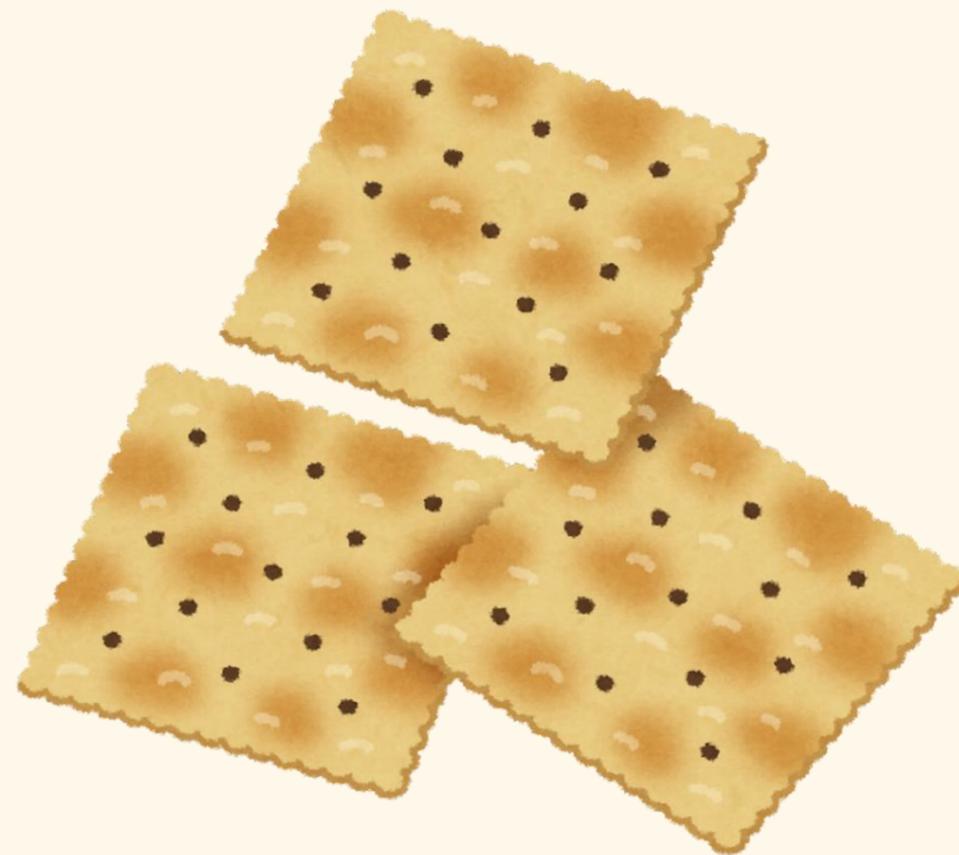


Lean Protein + Fibre Rich Carbohydrate

SNACK BUILDER



+

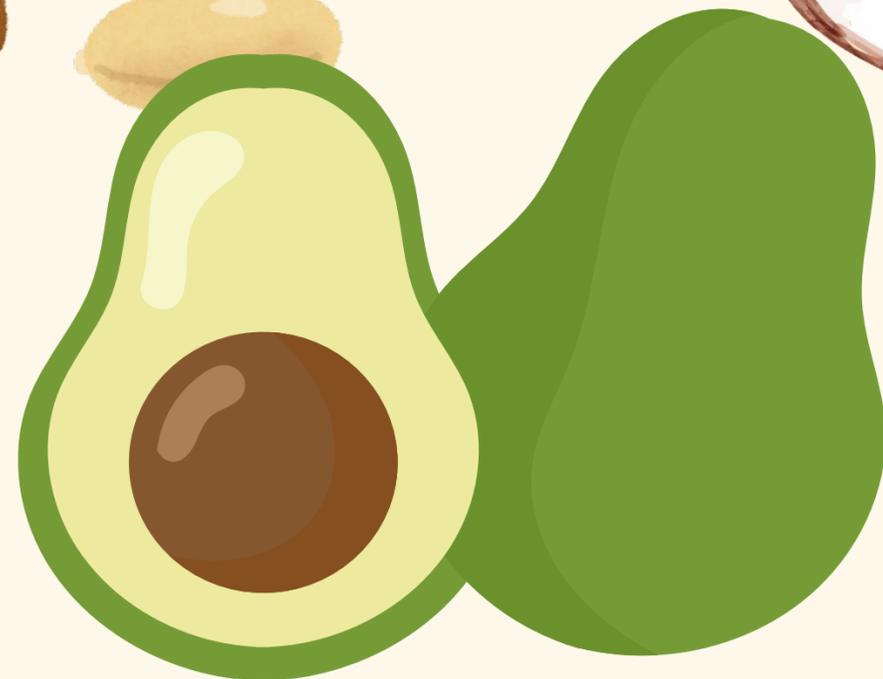
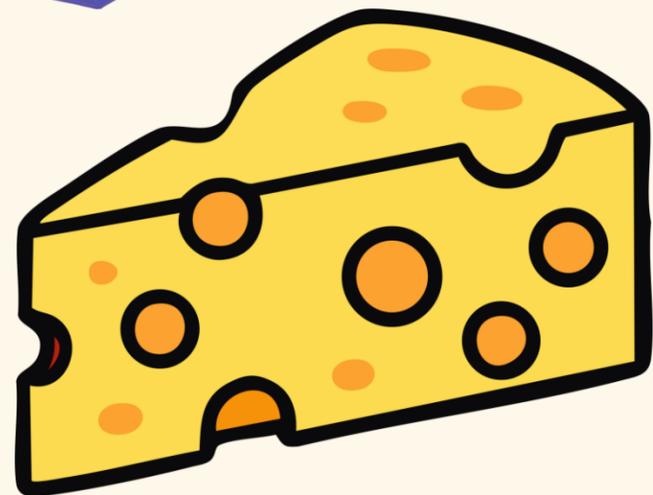


Lean Protein + Fibre Rich Carbohydrate

TIPS TO MANAGE LOW APPETITE

- **Eat small meals and snacks more frequently instead of larger meals.**
- **Eat larger portions when your appetite is better.**
- **Set an alarm to remind yourself to eat, if needed.**
- **Eat foods you enjoy!**
- **Try enjoying nutritious higher calorie foods.**

HIGHER CALORIE FOODS



PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Include a wide range of nutritious foods from all food groups.**
- **Prioritize protein to support muscle strength and maintenance.**
- **Consume enough calories during the day.**
- **Stay well hydrated by drinking 6-8 glasses of fluid.**
- **Follow an eating pattern that is enjoyable and supports quality of life.**
- **Embrace variety, colour, and balance in your food choices.**

CRAVINGS / FOOD NOISE

What is a Food Craving?

- intense urge to eat a certain food - ideally right away



What is Food Noise?

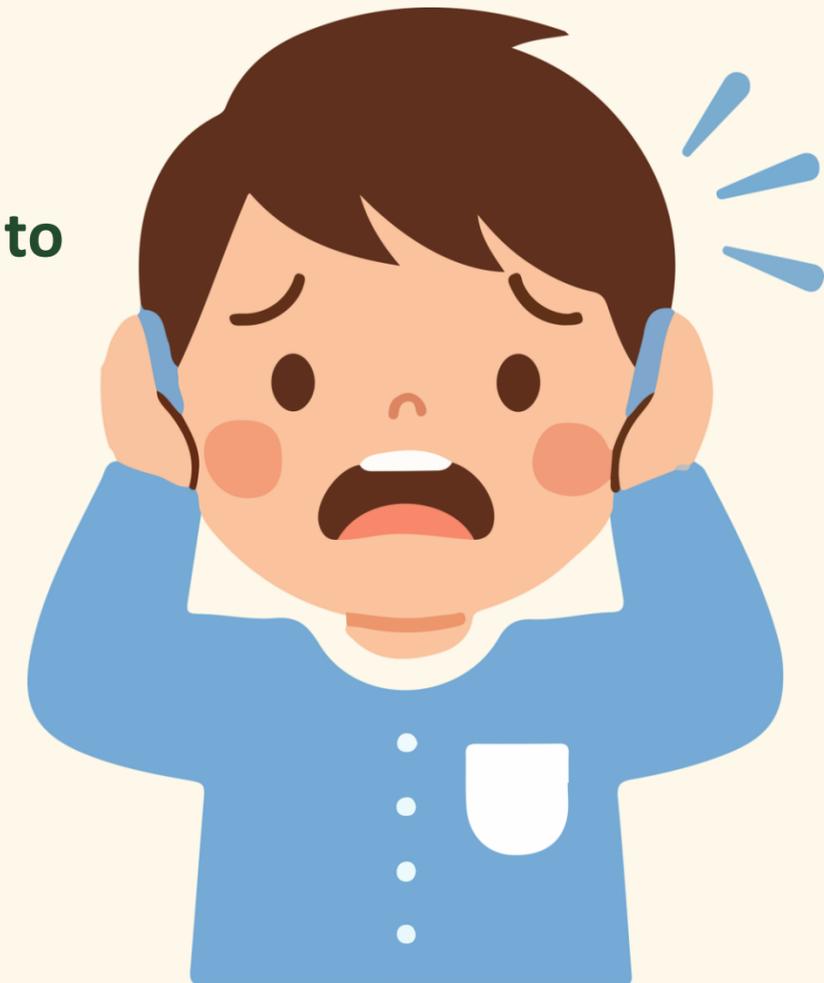
- persistent thoughts about food, leading to problematic eating patterns

May manifest in different ways such as

- constantly thinking about your next meal
- feeling unsatisfied no matter how much you eat
- anxiety about eating the 'right way'
- feeling shame, guilt, judgment around eating

May be triggered by factors such as

- stress, restrictive dieting, lack of sleep, hormonal imbalances, genetic predisposition



WHY DO WE EAT?

Biological Hunger

- in response to hunger / survival
- health / medications

Emotional or Situational Hunger

- stress, boredom, fatigue etc.
- because
 - it's there
 - it's that time of day
 - it smells good etc.



APPETITE SYSTEM & FOOD CUES

In our Control

- **Decision-Making Centre**
 - **thoughts → actions**
 - autopilot - why we should eat or eat more
 - conscious effort to have different thoughts or consider the consequences of autopilot thoughts

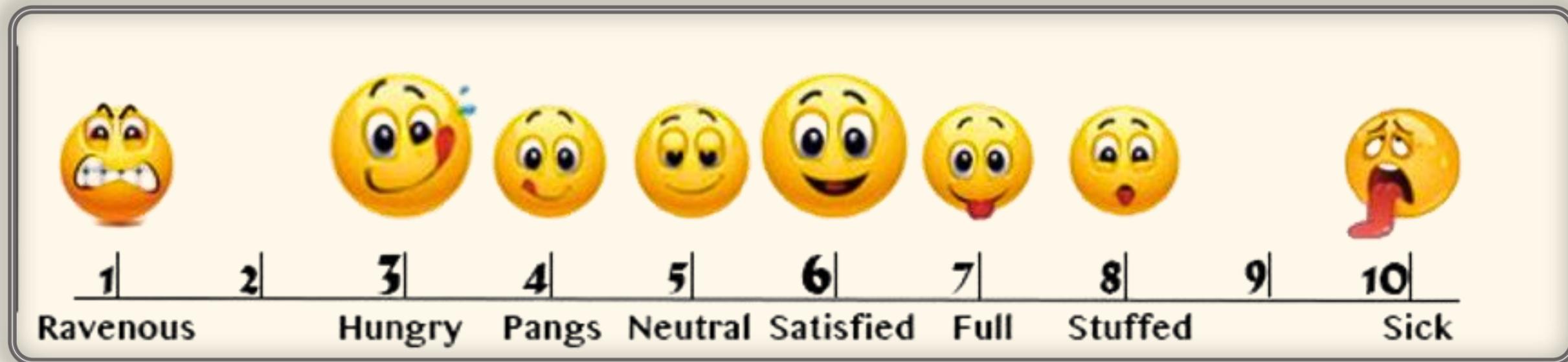
Behaviour Therapy
Diet & Lifestyle Factors



Not in our Control

- **Thermostat Centre**
 - controls hunger/fullness; many hormones involved (e.g. ghrelin, leptin, GLP1)
 - defends against fat loss
- Medications
- **Reward Centre**
 - pleasure you get from eating (e.g. dopamine)
 - cravings, wanting, desire

HUNGER & FULLNESS



Unpleasant Hunger - **Pleasant Hunger** - Neutral - **Pleasant Fullness** - **Unpleasant Fullness**

Hunger signals

- stomach grumbling
- weak/dizzy/faint
- Nauseous
- headache
- irritable / impatient
- lack focus / concentration

Fullness

- **Satiety** - signals fullness at a meal; absence of hunger between meals
- **Satisfaction** - enjoyment of your meal - think of foods good for the body and the soul



WHAT TO DO?



RETHINK WILLPOWER



EMBRACE SKILLPOWER

“I just need more willpower“

I SHOULD BE ABLE TO CONTROL
MY CRAVINGS

“If I had more discipline I
wouldn't overeat”

Mindful eating

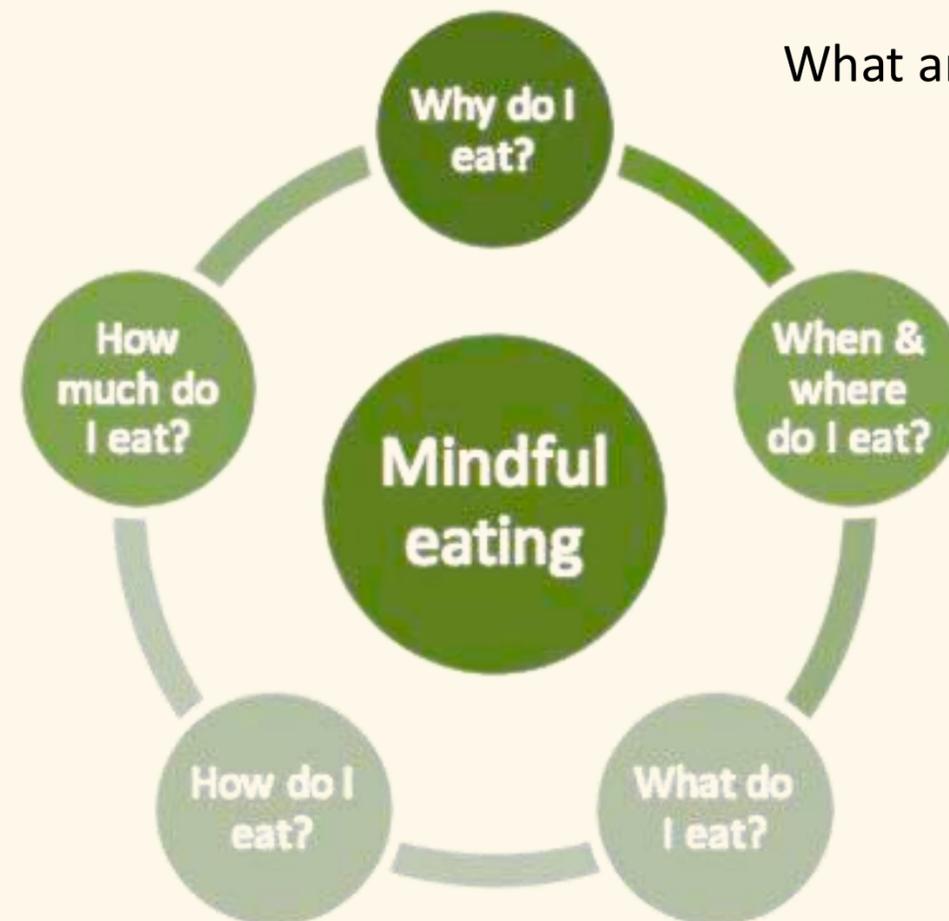
- practice eating with **Intention & Attention**
(without judging yourself)



MINDFUL EATING CYCLE

How do I feel when I'm done eating?
Do I feel compelled to clean my plate?

Do I eat quickly? distracted? on the go?
Do I eat as though I love food?



What are my food cues?

How often do I feel like eating? why?

Do I eat foods for health and enjoyment?
What change would I like to make?

The Mindful Eating Cycle developed by Michelle May, author of *“Eat What You Love, Love What You Eat: A Mindful Eating Program to Break Your Eat-Repent-Repeat Cycle”*.



HOW CAN I EAT MORE MINDFULLY?

THOUGHTS

- “Am I hungry?” or
- “Do I have the BLAH’s?”
 - B - bored**
 - L - loney**
 - A - anxious**
 - H - happy**
 - S - sad**
- **Positive Self Talk**
 - I can do this with practice and patience



BEHAVIOURS

- **reduce exposure to tempting foods**
 - buy less, single servings, out of sight
- **take time to enjoy your food**
 - smaller plates, put fork down between bites, chew slowly, savour the flavour
- **self care**
 - movement: deep breathing, exercise
 - gratitude journal, unplug from screens
 - water plants, connect with nature
 - listen to or play music
 - restart or try a new hobby

When a craving doesn't come from hunger, eating will never satisfy it!

Michelle May, MD

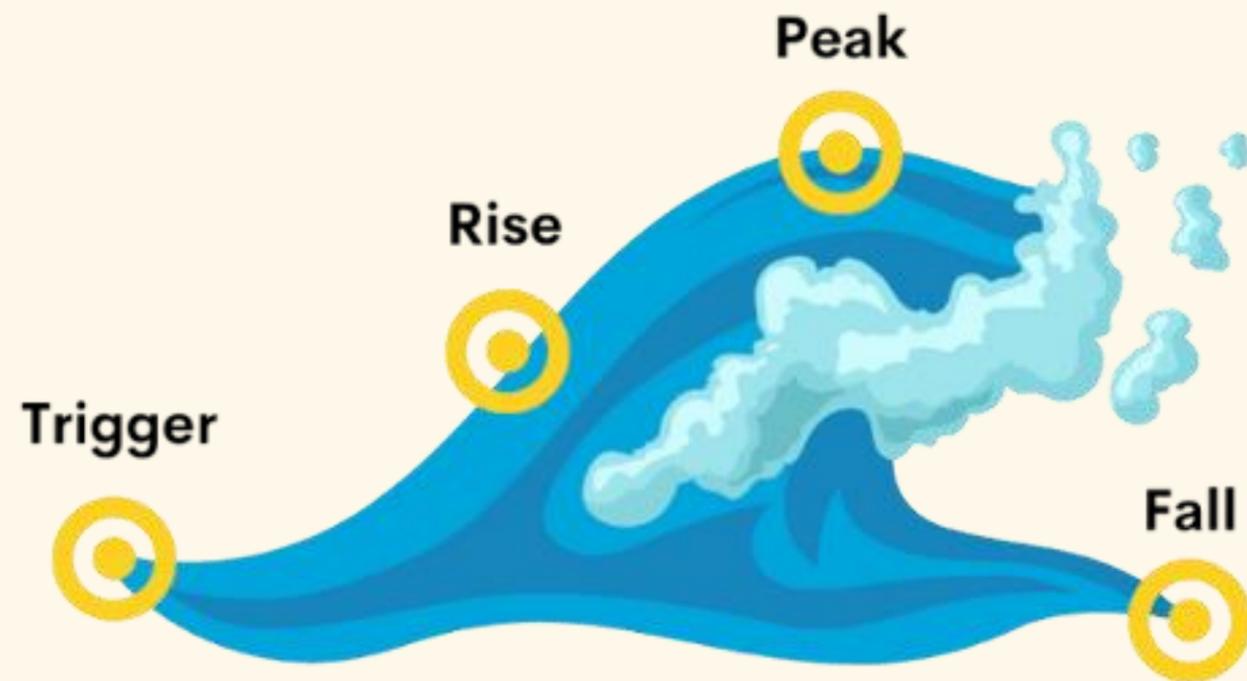


WHAT TO DO WHEN A CRAVING HITS?

RIDE THE CRAVING WAVE



DISTRACT YOURSELF



Craving peak: 3-5 minutes
Craving falls: 10-15 minutes

- **challenge your mind to shift your thinking**
 - visualize dream vacation
 - say the alphabet backwards
 - recall your friends' birth dates
- **shift your location away from food**
 - brush your teeth/fold laundry
 - call a friend
- **shift gears to an activity**
 - play a game -
solitaire/phone/crossword
 - deep breathing
 - stretching
 - look through photos

CRAVINGS / FOOD NOISE

Key Points

To quiet food noise, eat regularly in response to hunger & enjoy what you love without guilt or shame.

Relying on willpower & control to manage eating often leads to a cycle of restriction & loss of control

REDUCE FOOD NOISE BY FOCUSING MORE ON WELL-BEING & LESS ON WEIGHT.



NUTRITION BY ADDITION: CRAVINGS

FOOD FOR THE BODY & THE SOUL

Craving

Combine with

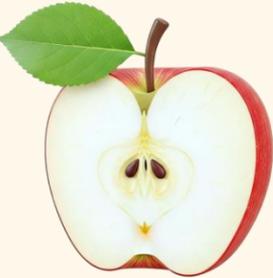
Sweet

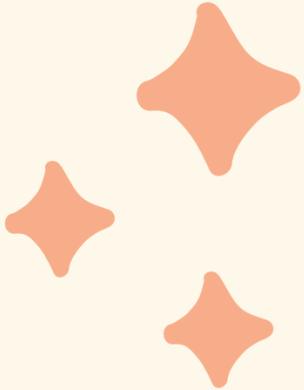


Salty & Crunchy



Sweet & Salty

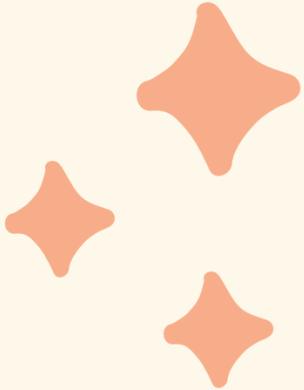




NOURISH TO FLOURISH: EATING FOR HEALTH & ENJOYMENT

- eat nutritionally balanced, enjoyable meals
- foods with protein and fibre provide longer lasting satisfaction
- try not to skip meals or go long stretches - eat about every 4 hours, according to your hunger and fullness
- limit highly processed foods, or enjoy them in moderation without judgment





NOURISH TO FLOURISH: EATING FOR HEALTH & ENJOYMENT

- practice Mindful Eating
 - be aware of environmental cues to eat like food commercials or treats at the office
 - “unlearn” situational eating triggers: TV at night → automatic snack
 - when you feel a craving building
 - Ride the Craving Wave - develop your Distraction Depot
 - reflect on emotions and what would best serve your need (hint: it’s usually not food)
- establish daily self nurturing practices





RESOURCES

The 3 Characters of the Appetite System: <https://vimeo.com/415671289>

Recipe Websites:

One Dish Kitchen: <https://onedishkitchen.com/cooking-for-one-recipes/>

Vegetarian: <https://ontariobbeans.on.ca/recipes/>

Half your Plate: <https://www.halfyourplate.ca/recipes/>

Odd Bunch: home delivery of affordable fresh produce re-routed not wasted

<https://www.oddbunch.ca/>

Home Delivery of cooked meals:

Heart to Home: <https://www.hearttohomemeals.ca/>

Meals on Wheels: <https://www.mealsonwheels.ca/>

Canada Food Guide 2019 (attached)

Diabetes Canada Handy Portion Guide (attached)

Nutrition By Addition (attached)

Ways to Nurture Yourself (attached)



QUESTIONS?

