



Media Release

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Time to Lose the Diet This International No Diet Day – Try Mindful Eating Instead

Eating Disorders Victoria (EDV) will celebrate this year's **International No Diet Day**, on Thursday May 6, by calling on dieters to ditch pointless and restrictive diets and embrace **Mindful Eating**, a simple-to-learn life skill which can lead to enjoying a satisfying, healthy and enjoyable relationship with food.

Mindful Eating is a skill that can help people break free from 'food rules' and begin to enjoy healthy, flexible and relaxed eating practices. EDV will host a Mindful Eating community awareness evening at Melbourne Town Hall on Thursday May 6, to introduce people to Mindful Eating practices.

EDV's Education Officer Dr Naomi Crafti, a leading educator of Mindful Eating in Australia, has been delivering Mindful Eating education programs to individuals and organisations and saw International No Diet Day as a great opportunity to offer this program to the wider community and hopefully build on the day's 'anti-diet' sentiment.

'For many years now, the diet and weight loss industry has flooded the market with a ridiculous range of weight loss products and schemes but the simple truth is that while the diet industry grows, so have obesity rates in Australia and around the world,' Dr Crafti said.

'Unfortunately, dieting has become entrenched in our culture and while many people are coming to the conclusion that dieting doesn't work, they need an alternative way to approach their eating', added Dr Crafti.

What is Mindful Eating?

Being mindful helps people focus their attention and awareness on the present moment, helping them disconnect from habitual, unsatisfying and harmful habits and behaviours. Mindful eating put simply, is the opposite of mindless eating.

'Because diets are often so restrictive, people can lose the ability to listen to their body's signals. Dieters are taught to ignore their own basic instincts about eating, such as eating when they are hungry or recognising when they are full and as a result dieters tend to develop very unhealthy attitudes towards food,' said Dr Crafti.

The Mindful Eating approach employs strategies which can rewire the way we respond to food, both physically and emotionally. Adopting a Mindful Eating mentality involves:

- Being aware of the positive and nurturing opportunities of food preparation and consumption;
- Choosing to eat food that is both pleasing and nourishing to the body by using your senses to explore, savour and taste;
- Acknowledging responses to food without judgement;
- Being aware of physical hunger and satiety cues to guide decisions to start and stop eating;
- Identifying personal triggers for mindless eating whether it be emotions, social pressures or certain foods.

Dr Crafti believes that teaching children to eat mindfully from an early age may prevent food becoming an unhealthy coping mechanism. Extensive research shows that Mindful Eating can help people control binge eating and overeating, enjoy food and feel more in touch with the body's internal hunger and satiety signals.

'Eating is one of life's great pleasures and I am always struck by how much time and effort women, in particular, waste worrying about food, weight and shape. It would be great if on this International No Diet Day people were able to enjoy food without guilt and struggle,' Dr Crafti added.

EDV encourages anyone who is struggling with mindless eating, to ditch the diet and learn how to enjoy a guilt-free relationship with food. Mindful Eating might just be the answer.

The Truth about Dieting

- **Diets make you FAT!** 9 out of 10 people who diet will regain ALL the weight they lose – and more!
- Dieting is the **greatest risk factor** for the development of an eating disorder.
- Young Australian women who start dieting before the age of 15 are more likely to experience **depression, binge eating, purging, and physical symptoms such as tiredness, low iron levels and menstrual irregularities**. Women who diet frequently (more than 5 times a year) are 75% more likely to experience depression.
- 31% of young women surveyed between 18 and 23 reported that at some time they had at least **experimented with unhealthy eating behaviours** including making themselves purge, deliberately abusing laxatives or diuretics, or fasting for at least 24 hours in order to lose weight.
- Dieting to control weight in adolescence is not only **ineffective**; it may actually promote **weight gain**. A study of adolescents showed that after 3 years of follow-up, regular adolescent dieters gained more weight than non-dieters.

If you feel your diet is adversely affecting your physical and/or psychological health, contact the **Eating Disorders Helpline on 1300 550 236** (operates 9.30am - 5.00 pm Monday – Friday)

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EDV's Mindful Eating Community Awareness Evening details

To celebrate International No Diet Day on May 6 2010, Eating Disorders Victoria will be presenting a community awareness evening offering a healthy alternative to dieting - Mindful Eating. 6.30pm - 8.30pm Thursday 6th May at the Melbourne Town Hall.

Admission is free but reservations are essential – contact Eating Disorders Victoria on 9885 6563.

About Eating Disorders Victoria

Eating Disorders Victoria is Victoria's foremost eating disorder charity and the primary source of support, information, community education and advocacy for people with eating disorders and their families in Victoria.

Support services are free and confidential and include the **Eating Disorders Helpline 1300 550 236**, online Chatroom and Messageboard, confidential support groups and education programs.

www.eatingdisorders.org.au