

Mindful snacking: it's about savouring the moment

The State of Snacking Report, launched by Mondelez International in September 2023, reveals that snacking is on the rise. This is not just a choice relating to convenience or cost: snacks are seen as a necessary indulgence, especially when times are tough.



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According to the report, snacking is not a luxury, but rather a daily staple as 78% of South Africans report having a snack at least twice a day. Seventy-two percent (72%) say they enjoy snacking in the morning, including a third (29%) who do so before breakfast.

In addition to providing much needed energy to get through the day, snacks also provide moments of reward or indulgence for consumers looking for a reward or respite amid challenging times.

The report reveals that over eight in 10 South Africans (86%) snack to spoil or reward themselves with three-quarters (75%) saying, “these days, it's more important than ever to have moments of indulgence in the day” and 80% believe that “chocolate is good for the soul”

Six in 10 South African consumers (61%) count on snacks in tough times, and 64% say snacking helps them take their mind off the issues of the world - a number that is higher for Gen Z (77%) and Millennials (74%).

“While snacking is a growing trend among South African consumers, it is equally important to encourage mindful

snacking,” says Arpun Sur of Mondelēz International.



Report: The 'why' behind Gen Z's snack choices

Hunter Thurman and Mary Mathes 25 Aug 2023



Emerging science has found that mindful snacking leads to a better relationship with food which, in turn, leads to people making more deliberate and conscious food choices. By paying attention to hunger cues and feelings of fullness, one can better manage food portions and avoid overeating.

Mindful snacking is an approach that can be best described as eating with intention and attention. In other words, it is about being conscious about what it is you want to eat, why you're eating, and how it makes you feel.

“Next time you consider snacking, ask yourself these three important questions: Why do I want to snack, what do I want for a snack, and how can I savour my snack?” suggests Sur.

Moments of indulgence

So, it's not necessary to cut out that piece of chocolate or daily snack. Instead, it's about consuming the snack, whether sweet or savoury, with mindfulness and appreciation. By adhering to the following six behaviours, anyone can practise mindful snacking anytime and anywhere, leading to a positive eating experience:

Know what you want. Is the snack meeting an emotional or functional need? Do you want to eat a piece of chocolate because you're feeling sad or is it a stop-gap because you haven't had a chance to eat lunch?

Enjoy and appreciate the snack with all your senses. Take time to really savour the snack and reflect on its taste, smell and consistency. Is it smooth on the tongue? Do you really enjoy those crunchy bits?

Be aware of portion size and moderate it. If it's crisps you're craving, don't go for the biggest bag you can find. Rather opt for a smaller bag and then savour its contents. If chocolate is your go-to snack, stick to a single serving bar or break a few blocks from a slab and save the rest for later, or share it with someone!

Be present in the moment. Don't quickly munch your snacks in front of your computer, mobile phone or television screen. Rather set time aside to focus on what you're eating and – once again – savour it with all your senses.

Be aware of your hunger, fullness and satisfaction level. Don't eat for the sake of eating. If you're not hungry, rather wait. If you're full, then stop eating.

Reflect on your whole eating experience. Eating should be a bit of a ritual, rather than a quick bite, chew and swallow episode that leads to low satisfaction levels and the urge to eat more. Rather reflect on what you're eating, appreciate the nourishment the food is providing your body, and most importantly, enjoy it.

And lastly remember, a snack can as easily be an apple, carrot or banana as a bar of chocolate, biscuits or packet of crisps – the choice, quantity and frequency are up to you. So, make it mindful!