


# LifeTimes



*A quarterly publication to enhance the quality of life of individuals, families, and communities*

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## Your family disaster plan can keep you snug and safe!

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If you knew a disaster was coming, wouldn't you make preparations to protect yourself and your family?

Many potential disasters could impact your family. A hazardous material accident could force your family to evacuate your home. A winter storm, earthquake or tornado could cut off basic services, such as gas, water, electricity or phone service.

### Creating a family disaster plan

The first step is to update your family's disaster plan. You should pack six basic types of supplies in a special container (such as a large trash container, backpack or duffle bag) in case of a natural or man-made disaster. These supplies include:

- ▶ **Water** (store one gallon per person per day)
- ▶ **Ready-to-eat food** (canned food, canned juices, high-energy foods, vitamins, comfort foods, special foods for infants or family members on a special diet)
- ▶ **First aid supplies** (bandages, antiseptic, soap, latex gloves, non-prescription drugs such as aspirin, antacid, anti-diarrhea medication, etc.)



## Many potential disasters could impact your family.

- ▶ **Clothing and bedding** (include sturdy shoes, rain gear, blankets, hats, gloves, thermal underwear, sunglasses)
- ▶ **Tools and emergency supplies** (battery-operated radio, flashlights, fire extinguisher, pliers, shut-off wrench, matches in waterproof container, liquid soap, toilet paper, feminine supplies, personal hygiene items, household chlorine bleach)
- ▶ **Special items** (for an infant, medication for family members, books and games for entertainment, important family documents).

### Preparing for a winter storm

Although you may not know when the first ice storm is coming, you can take steps now to keep your family safe. A key rule is to listen to the latest weather reports on local radio and television. To prepare for a severe storm or blizzard, you should have the items listed above readily on hand at home. Be sure

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# The art of mindful eating

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**D**o you have a habit of eating when you are bored, lonely, stressed out, depressed or even tired? Sometimes we find ourselves eating, not because we are hungry, but because we are going through different emotions, and we reach out to food for comfort.

## What is mindful eating?

Mindful eating is defined as being conscious of *why* you are eating. This simple concept has helped people struggling with weight issues, eating disorders, body image and even self esteem. It is not about following recipes or counting calories. It's about learning *how* and *why* you eat, and less about *what* you eat.

Mindful eating helps you to move away from the diet mentality and puts you in touch with your inner self. The more you are in touch with your hunger and fullness, the less you need to count calories.

## Eat, drink & be mindful

Mindfulness is being diligently attentive to your body, mind, thoughts and feelings as you eat.

- **Mindfulness of the body**

This involves listening to your body and being in touch with your inner self. How does your body tell you when it's hungry or full? Does your stomach rumble? Do you experience low energy levels or hunger pains? Do you ignore your body's feedback? A good rule of thumb is to eat

when your hunger scale is between 3 and 6 (on a scale of 1-10). At level 1 you are beyond hungry. You are totally out of energy, can't concentrate and feel dizzy. At level 10, you are beyond full or stuffed, a typical Thanksgiving dinner feeling. Conscious awareness of what is going on inside your body helps you know when you are satisfied rather than stuffed or starving.

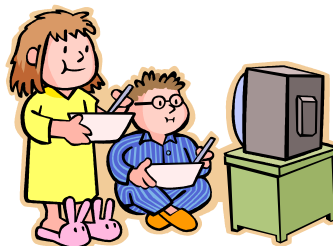
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## Mindful eating is defined as being conscious of *why* you are eating.

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- **Mindfulness of the mind**

Are you concentrating and paying attention to every bite? Or are you eating without paying attention to the texture, temperature, taste and even the sound of food? Eat your food slowly and pay attention to every single bite. Pay attention to the quantity of food you consume instead of eating or snacking mindlessly.



- **Mindfulness of feelings**

What emotions do you experience that may trigger you either to start or stop eating? Sometimes the strongest longings for food happen when you're at your weakest point emotionally. Many people turn to food for comfort — consciously or unconsciously — when they're facing a difficult problem or looking to keep themselves occupied. Pay attention to how you're feeling when you eat and how hungry you are. Sometimes, coping with your feelings is more important than changing the type of foods you eat.

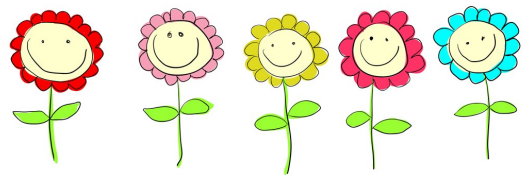
- **Mindfulness of thoughts**

Pay attention to your thoughts regarding your body weight or eating habits. Negative thoughts may trigger mindless eating. Pay careful attention to "should" and "should not" thoughts, critical thoughts (I'm so fat!), food rules, "good" and "bad" food categories. If you make a mistake, learn to forgive yourself. Focus on the positive changes you are making in your eating habits, and give yourself credit for making other changes that ensure better health.

*Source: Albers, Susan. (2003). Eating Mindfully: How to End Mindless Eating & Enjoy a Balanced Relationship with Food. New Harbinger Publications.*

# How to become happier

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**H**ow happy are you? Why are you happy? To find out your level of happiness today, you can take a variety of surveys or questionnaires. You can find a very good online quiz on the Web at [www.authentichappiness.com](http://www.authentichappiness.com). This site was created by Martin Seligman, PhD, author of the book *Authentic Happiness* (2004), which identifies three components of happiness: meaning, pleasure, and engagement.

Seligman is known for his work on positive psychology and recent work on “happiness.” In recent years this topic has created a buzz of excitement with a vast amount of research being done. Classes, courses and even college degrees are now available.

In her 2008 book, *The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want*, Sonja Lyubomirsky, PhD, dispels three myths of happiness. She uses a pie chart to show what determines happiness: 10 percent of happiness is determined by circumstances, 50 percent is determined by our set point, and 40 percent of happiness is determined by intentional activity.

Three myths are related to happiness, according to Lyubomirsky. First, you cannot find happiness. The reason is that it does not exist “out there,” but rather resides within us. Second, thinking “I would be happy IF \_\_\_\_\_,” or “I will be happy WHEN \_\_\_\_\_,” or waiting for our circumstances to change has little bearing on the outcome. Third, the notion we are born happy or unhappy—and believe there is little we

can do about it—is false. Much research shows persuasively we can overcome our genetic programming.

Lyubomirsky has proven that the following 12 activities, used individually or in combination, do increase one’s happiness over time.

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1. Express gratitude to others. Find three things a day to be grateful about.
2. Work on being optimistic by looking at the bright side. Find the silver lining in a cloud.
3. Stop focusing on comparisons with others. Be yourself.
4. Practice acts of kindness. Do a good deed daily.
5. Nurture social relationships. Make time for your family and friends.
6. Learn strategies for coping. Dispute your negative beliefs in writing and consider more optimistic explanations for the problem.
7. Learn to forgive. Write a letter of forgiveness, which you can choose to mail.
8. Increase “flow experiences” by making time to enjoy what you are doing.
9. Savor life’s joys, past, present and future.
10. Commit to your goals by writing them down and developing a plan to implement them.
11. Maintain a spiritual or religious connection. Be open to your higher source.
12. Take care of your body. Eat well, exercise and relax.

Sources: Lyubomirsky, Sonja. (2008). *The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want*. New York: The Penguin Press.

Seligman, Martin. (2004). *Authentic Happiness*. New York: Free Press.

# Your family disaster plan can keep you snug and safe!

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to check for an adequate supply of heating fuel. Be aware of fire hazards posed by prolonged use of stoves, fireplaces and space heaters.

The safest place to be during a winter storm or cold snap is indoors. Dress properly before venturing outdoors. Wear several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight clothing. Outer garments should be tightly woven, water repellent, and hooded. Avoid overexertion when outdoors, including when snow shoveling. Be aware that cold weather itself, without any physical exertion, puts an extra strain on the heart.

## Safety checking your vehicle

- ▶ Before severe storms and cold arrive, winterize all vehicles. Pay special attention to engine, fuel, ignition and exhaust systems.
- ▶ Make sure tires and brakes are in good condition and that the heater, windshield wipers and lights work properly. Check the antifreeze level.
- ▶ Equip each vehicle with an emergency winter storm kit that includes non-perishable foods, extra clothes, blankets, flashlight, fresh batteries, shovel, booster cables, flares and bags of sand.



## Winter driving safety tips

- ▶ **Always keep the gas tank filled.**
- ▶ If you become stranded in your vehicle, stay in your vehicle. Never try to walk to safety.
- ▶ Conserve fuel and heat by running the heater and engine sparingly.
- ▶ To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, open a car window slightly. Periodically clear snow away from the exhaust pipe.

By following these safety measures and staying prepared during cold weather and storms, you can avoid the fatal effects of winter during the next few months.

For a more detailed checklist, contact your local Red Cross office, or visit MU Extension's Web site, [extension.missouri.edu/cemp/preparedness.html](http://extension.missouri.edu/cemp/preparedness.html).

*Adapted in part from a disaster preparedness handout created by Beverly Maltsberger, Community Development Specialist, University of Missouri Extension.*

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