

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING OUR CONFERENCE THIS YEAR!



CALL FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPEAKERS!

THE DEADLINE FOR SPEAKER PROPOSALS IS OCT 1ST, 2025.

The West Virginia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics will host our Annual Conference and Expo at Tamarack Conference Center in Beckley, WV on Friday April 17th, 2026. We're seeking advanced-level, evidence-based presentations that address the current challenges faced by nutrition and dietetics professionals. We encourage proposals that inspire discussion, provoke thought, and offer actionable solutions for our attendees. Please visit <https://www.eatrightwv.org/meeting2025/> to fill out a speaker proposal.

WVAND BOARD 2025-2026

CHECK OUT OUR BOARD MEMBERS FOR THIS UPCOMING YEAR:

President: Nettie Freshour

President-Elect: Jessica Runyon

Past President: Helenia Sedoski

Treasurer: Kelli George

Treasurer-elect: Rachel Decaria

Secretary: Elizabeth Zegeer

Delegate: Rebecca Mills

Public Policy Chair: Emma Slagel

Professional Development Chair: Brittany Paitsel

Professional Development Chair-elect: Erin Allen

Membership Co-Chairs: Sina King-Smith and Kasey Yost

Communications Chair: Ca'Terria Williams

Foundation/Fundraising Chair: Stephanie Thompson

Diversity co-chairs: Angel Cunningham and Sharon Maynard



THE PRACTICE OF MINDFUL EATING

by Karina Patel, BS, Dietetic Intern

Mindful eating has developed traction as an approach to motivating individuals to use their intuition to discover happiness in the preparation and intake of food. Rooted in Buddhist and other reflective cultures, mindfulness is referred to as the state of attentiveness to and awareness of all that occurs in the present. Mindfulness allows attentiveness to sentiments of hunger and satiation and helps deliver a level approach to food consumption. Moreover, mindful eating favors healthier food choices and the formation of practices that support physical and mental health.

How Does Mindful Eating Work?

Mindful eating concentrates on food experiences, physical sensations, & perceptions and sentiments related to food, with increased awareness and no judgement. Foods chosen, internal and external physical cues, and reactions to those cues are all focused on, with the aim to foster a more pleasant meal experience and awareness of the eating environment. Practices of mindful eating include eating slowly, focusing on eating, recognizing inner cues, eating non-judgmentally, awareness of senses, eating in the present, reflecting on mindless eating, & recognizing interconnectedness.

Eat Slowly

The body typically sends its fullness signal around 20 minutes after intake is initiated, and this can oftentimes lead to unconscious overeating, as the brain has not registered the fullness signal. Eating slowly allows for recognition of feeling satisfied to help avoid overeating and has shown to help maximize satiation and reduce calorie intake during meals. Simple techniques to slow down the meal are to pause from time to time during eating to consider fullness, to chew each morsel 25 times or more, and to set down the fork following each bite.



WEST VIRGINIA ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

NEWSLETTER & MEMBER UPDATES

Focus on Eating

If distracted, it is more difficult to listen to the body's signals related to food and other needs. Remove distractions, that is, do not eat in the car, watch television at the time that food is eaten, or eat in front of a screen, such as the phone or computer, so that focus is fully devoted to the meal and eating experience.

Recognize Inner Cues

Instead of eating upon emotional signals such as stress, sadness, frustration, loneliness, or even boredom, listen to the body's internal cues. Is the stomach growling or feeling fatigued, dizzy, or lightheaded? Use internal sensations of hunger and fullness to direct eating rather than respond to an emotional want.

Eat Non-judgementally

Mindful eating is the experience of food with all five senses, awareness, and feelings, without judgement. Recognize likes, dislikes, and impartial sentiments related to food free of judgement. Awareness of judgements is one crucial element of mindfulness.

Aware of Senses

Use all of the senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch—to explore, savor, and taste food. Recognize the sounds, colors, smells, tastes, and textures of the food, in addition to emotions at time of eating, to remain fully attuned to the eating experience. Pause from time to time during eating to capture these senses.

Eating in the Present

Mindfulness is concerned with presence and full awareness of the current moment. Concentrate on the real-time experiences related to food and eating, not future outcomes. Presence during eating allows for more control over how much is eaten and control over cravings, and meals are made more enjoyable and memorable.

Reflecting on Mindless Eating

Recognize and reflect on the effects of unmindful eating. Mindless eating is eating despite full and in disregard of the body's hunger and fullness signals; eating according to emotions (sadness, frustration, boredom, loneliness); eating in solitude at erratic times and locations; eating emotional comfort foods; and eating distracted due to multitasking.

Recognize Interconnectedness

Mindfulness as to the interconnectedness of the earth, organisms, and cultural traditions and the effect of food choices on those systems can support wiser decisions on sustainability and health in food. Consider all of the individuals involved in the meal: from the individual(s) that prepared it to those that stocked the shelves at the supermarket, to those that planted and harvested the raw ingredients, as well as the water, soil, and other elements involved in its formation and the cultural traditions and recipes handed down for generations.

About the Author

My name is Karina, and I am a second-year student in the WVU Dietetic Internship program. A West Virginia native, I earned my high school diploma from Magnolia High School in 2020, a school in the small town of New Martinsville, WV. In May 2023, I earned a Bachelor of Science in Human Nutrition and Foods here at West Virginia University. As a master's student, I am focusing on the effects of a vegan diet compared to a Mediterranean diet on plasma/serum cholesterol concentrations in adults with hypercholesterolemia. As a future registered dietitian, I aspire to help clients achieve their food- and nutrition-related goals.



References

The President and Fellows of Harvard College. Mindful Eating - The Nutrition Source. The Nutrition Source. September 14, 2020. Accessed March 11, 2025.

Willard C. 6 Ways to Practice Mindful Eating. Mindful. December 9, 2022. Accessed March 11, 2025.

INTERVIEW: ANNA DAVIS OF ENCOMPASS HEALTH

by Karina Patel, BS, Dietetic Intern

Anna Davis is the food and nutrition services director and registered dietitian at Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital in Morgantown, WV. She serves as a Regional Advisory Nutrition Board member and oversees 15 hospitals in the Mid-Atlantic region. In her role, Anna is also a preceptor to dietetic interns. She was the 2015 WVAND Outstanding Dietitian of the Year and received the Outstanding Preceptor Award for 2013-2014.

Can you tell us a little about yourself and your journey into the field of dietetics?

I have been in the field of dietetics for 35 years. I began as a clinical dietitian and gradually transitioned into food service management within 2 years of getting my RD. I enjoy physical rehabilitation and seeing patient progress for a more independent lifestyle.

What inspired you to enter the field of dietetics as a registered dietitian, and what led you to your current role as a food service director?

I enjoy promoting healthy lifestyles and helping others with wellness. Food service management allows me to influence better meal preparation for patients.



WEST VIRGINIA ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

NEWSLETTER & MEMBER UPDATES

How has your role as a food service director shaped your perspective on clinical nutrition and health care?

How has your role as a food service director shaped your perspective on clinical nutrition and health care?

Can you walk us through a typical day in your role? How do you juggle responsibilities as a dietitian, food service director, and preceptor?

A typical day begins with safety and sanitation rounding with food service staff. I then transition to review orders and screening and assessment of patients. I attend meetings as scheduled. Students are permitted to shadow me and assist with those job duties. Safety and sanitation rounds are repeated at the end of the day.

How do you overcome the challenges that you face in managing these multiple roles?

I prioritize challenges based on high-risk to patients. I also delegate others to attend meetings that overlap. Clear communication is key to this success.

Developing rapport with patients and clients is essential in dietetics. What techniques do you use to develop trust and effective communication?

The key to success in developing rapport with patients is regular leadership rounding and following up on patients 3 times a week. Providing good customer service skills is needed at all times.

What do you find most fulfilling with respect to your work as a dietitian?

What is rewarding is seeing the improvement in the patient's nutrition and health and seeing the progress they have made while here at Encompass Health.

Nutrition is a constantly evolving field. How do you stay up-to-date with the latest research and recommendations?



WEST VIRGINIA ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

NEWSLETTER & MEMBER UPDATES

I attend regular continuing education seminars and meetings to stay up-to-date with the latest nutrition research and recommendations. Good networking is also essential with peers.

What changes or advancements do you foresee in the field of nutrition and dietetics in the years to come?

In the years to come, I feel telehealth will be a big part of the nutrition care process.

What changes or advancements do you foresee in the field of nutrition and dietetics in the years to come?

My advice to aspiring dietitians is to network within the profession and continue to insist on being part of the interdisciplinary team. Our voices need to be heard as professionals. Also, never stop learning.

