



**“ALTUS PUBLIC SCHOOLS”
DISTRICT WELLNESS NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 2024**

Hi there,

Welcome to “Altus Public Schools” Wellness Newsletter!

We want to share periodic insights and tips to expand your knowledge and improve your health and well-being. Enjoy!

As we recognize American Heart Month this February, let's embrace the concept of flexible eating—balancing foods that support heart health with flavors that feed our soul. Celebrate the joy of nourishing both body and spirit!

Consider the foods you love to eat and why you love them. Maybe they're part of a cultural tradition, remind you of a family member, or simply taste delicious and satisfy cravings in the moment.

Now, think about how often you allow yourself to eat these foods. Do you follow any rules about when, where, or how much you can eat them?

As we dive into the concept of ‘Food Neutrality’, reflect on your answers to these questions. Remember, this is not about judging food choices; rather, it’s an opportunity to practice self-compassion as we explore new ideas!

Food Neutrality

Labeling foods as ‘bad’ or ‘tempting’ can evoke feelings of guilt, shame, or stress when consuming them. For some, this tendency fuels a cycle of restricting, then craving and binging on ‘forbidden foods.’

Food neutrality challenges the labeling of foods as ‘good’ or ‘bad’, recognizing that all foods can fit into a balanced diet. When choices are not dictated by control or guilt, you experience food freedom and develop a “healthier relationship with eating”.

“For there is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so.” - William Shakespeare

Unconditional permission to eat supports a habituation response—this is the idea that wonderful things are especially wonderful the first time they happen (like eating a piece of cake), but wane with repetition (like eating multiple pieces of cake).

This month, focus on consistently honoring your cravings – whether it’s ordering a salad or enjoying an ice cream! As you give yourself unconditional permission, be mindful about how you experience food. You may discover your body no longer wants the things you once craved in excess...or that you don’t really love the food to begin with.