



## Everything you need to know about eating for satiety

If you find your stomach grumbling soon after polishing off a plate of food, it could have to do with what was on it. After all, there's a reason why a meal can hit the spot for a whole afternoon—or just an hour. It all comes down to satiety, which results from the combination of physical fullness and a meal composition that suppresses hunger. “Certain foods that promote satiety help prevent overeating and decrease unhealthy snacking,” says Heather Leidy, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. Here's what else you need to know to reach your goal, whether you're setting out to shed extra pounds, maintain your weight, or simply fend off the grumbles.

### Eating for satiety

Some foods are more satiating than others. Exhibit A is protein, which is MVP when it comes to giving your body fuel that lasts. “Protein helps you feel fuller a little bit more than carbohydrates, and quite a bit more than fats,” says Douglas Paddon-Jones, PhD, a distinguished professor in the Department of Nutrition and Metabolism at the University of Texas Medical Branch. That's because consuming protein-rich foods reduces the secretion of ghrelin, the hormone that reminds you you're hungry, and increases circulating levels of the hormones that satiate, so you can more or less forget about food.

To achieve satiety, Leidy and Paddon-Jones agree it's smart to shoot for 30 grams of protein at each meal. To give you an idea of what that looks like: 1 cup of Greek yogurt has about 23 grams of protein, 1 cup of lentils has nearly 27 grams, and a 3-ounce serving of chicken has 26 grams. “When we don't consume these ‘optimal’ quantities of protein, we feel hungrier throughout the day and have more food cravings,” Leidy says of why it's smart to eat ample amounts.

To that point, it's wise to choose a protein you can eat, rather than one you drink. “Any food in solid form is a little more satiating than the same total amount of protein in liquid form,” Paddon-Jones says.

### What carbs have to do with satiety?

Even though carbs come second to protein in affecting satiety, not all are created equal. In a 2016 preliminary study published in the *Journal of Food & Function*, researchers found that natural or minimally-processed foods (think produce, poultry, whole grains, and unsweetened yogurts) were more satiating than ultra-processed foods, which they defined as “substances extracted or derived from food and additives, typically with five or more and usually many (cheap) ingredients.”

Meanwhile, complex carbohydrates that are high in dietary fiber may impact satiety in a good way: For example, one small study that compared higher-fiber, low-sugar oatmeal to a lower-fiber, ready-to-eat sugar-sweetened cereal found that participants perceived oatmeal as more satiating. After eating it, they ate less at a subsequent meal than participants who'd pre-gamed with the cereal.

In addition, some data suggests that foods with a higher glycemic load, i.e., foods that are digested quickly and raise the blood sugar as a result, could actually increase hunger and decrease satiety, Leidy says.

### How eating speed and meal timing affect satiety

The pace at which you clear your plate could affect how soon after eating you start to feel hungry: “Eating more slowly appears to lead to sustained increases in fullness and sustained reductions in hunger,” Leidy says. Your eating schedule could play a part, too—so if you're prone to skipping meals like breakfast to cut down on calories, reconsider. “Breakfast appears to be more satiating than lunch or dinner,” Leidy says, adding that protein inclusion in the morning meal could also offer benefits.

### The bottom line

“While satiety can help curb appetite and increase one's ability to adhere to an eating pattern, we need to be mindful of our hunger and satiety cues,” Leidy says, pointing out that regardless of how well you manage your physical food cravings, you might eat for reasons besides hunger. In other words: Even balanced and timely meal planning isn't a cure-all for unhealthy eating behaviors, some of which are learned. Seeking satiety, Paddon-Jones says, isn't a magic solution—just another tool that can help you reach your goals one step at a time.

Source: Rita Colorita for <https://www.weightwatchers.com/us/article/how-food-makes-you-feel-full>

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