

Week 2: Hunger and Fullness

Hunger is Normal

- Hunger is a fundamental drive that ensures you obtain the necessary fuel (calories) and nutrients to function and survive.
- Your body uses a complex system of communication between the brain, gut, pancreas, liver, and fat tissue to regulate appetite and hunger signals.

Dangers of Denying Hunger

- Disconnects us from our body's true needs.
- Causes hunger signals to fade.
- Lowers your body's energy requirements.
- Reinforces belief we can't trust ourselves around food.

Lost Your Hunger Signals?

Many factors can interfere with our hunger signals:

- Dieting
- Busy lifestyle
- Skipping breakfast
- Stress
- High levels of caffeine consumption

How to Honor Hunger

- Begin to listen for it and learn to recognize the signals.
- Eat regularly and don't get overly hungry.
- Tune in to the direct experience of your body.
- Be patient and don't panic.

Feeling Your Fullness

Many factors can make it difficult to recognize comfortable fullness:

- History of dieting
- Mindless or emotional eating
- Eating when overly hungry
- Being taught to clean your plate
- Respecting the costs and value of food
- Sleep deprivation
- Experience with food insecurity

How Fullness Works

The brain and digestive system communicate to regulate fullness.

When you eat, nerve receptors in your stomach send signals to the brain that you are starting to feel full. This feedback loop takes time. It can take 20 to 30 minutes to feel your fullness.

Unconditional Permission

The ability to respect your fullness requires giving yourself unconditional permission to eat. How can you stop eating in response to fullness when you believe you won't be able to eat that food or meal again?

Hunger & Fullness Scale

Our mind and body function best when we stay within the 3 to 7 range. Respond to your hunger and fullness cues before reaching extreme hunger or extreme fullness. When we wait too long to listen to our body's signals (1 and 2 on the scale), this can leave us feeling out of control and more likely to eat past the point of fullness (8 to 10 on the scale).

0	Painfully hungry. This is primal hunger, which is very intense and urgent.
1	Ravenous and irritable. Anxious to eat.
2	Very hungry. Looking forward to a hearty meal or snack.
3	Hungry and ready to eat, but without urgency. It's a polite hunger.
4	Subtly hungry, slightly empty.
5	Neutral. Neither hungry nor full.
6	Beginning to feel emerging fullness.
7	Comfortable fullness. You feel satisfied and content.
8	A little too full. This doesn't feel pleasant, but not yet an unpleasant experience.
9	Very full, too full. You feel uncomfortable; need to unbutton pants or remove belt.
10	Painfully full, stuffed. You may feel nauseous.