

The DIET THAT TURNS OFF HUNGER

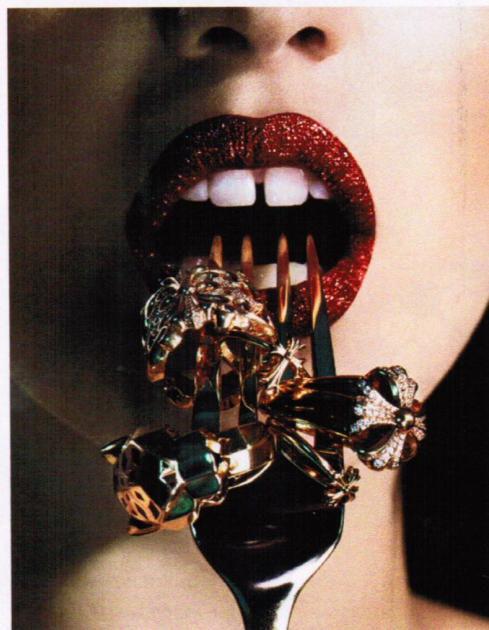
How to eat for satisfaction and fullness so you don't fall prey to overeating. By Karen Asp

IF YOUR STOMACH feels like a bottomless pit, you're not alone. Eating when you're not really hungry is something many adults struggle with, whether due to cravings, boredom, or bad habits. How to keep it under control? The trick is to choose more satiating foods and adopt habits that keep your body properly fueled so you don't get hungry in the first place. Here, top tips from the experts.

Avoid processed carbohydrates like white rice, sugary drinks, and low-fat cookies. Duh, right? But it's not just the obvious calorie count that's the problem. "These foods create surges and crashes in insulin that exacerbate hunger and make it difficult not to overeat," says endocrinologist David Ludwig, M.D., the author of *Always Hungry?* and a professor at Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. Processed carbohydrates raise insulin levels in the body, which causes fat cells to take in excess calories. "Think of insulin as fertilizer for your fat cells," he explains. These spikes restrict the number of calories you're giving your body to fuel your brain, and as a result it sends out hunger signals to drum up more calories. Sugary drinks include wine (sorry), so order a vodka and club soda instead.

Choose unprocessed whole foods. They have a lower calorie density, so you can eat larger portions. "Foods that offer the most volume for your calories—think fruits, vegetables, and broth-based soups—help you feel psychologically and physically fuller," says Barbara Rolls, a professor of nutritional sciences at the Pennsylvania State University.

Eat walnuts, avocados, and flaxseeds. "Have some healthy fat at every meal," says Ludwig. It will lower your insulin levels, among other great benefits. "Walnuts can alter the way the brain views food and impacts appetite by increasing activity in an area of the



brain that regulates satiety," says Olivia M. Farr, a staff scientist at Boston's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center who has studied how walnuts suppress hunger. A study on avocados found that people who ate half an avocado at lunch reported a 40 percent decreased desire to eat over a three-hour period. And flaxseeds will make you feel fuller instantly. Try adding ground flaxseeds to a salad, a smoothie, or oatmeal.

Have protein and fiber at every meal. "Both stabilize blood sugar levels, and because they take longer to digest they'll keep you fuller longer," says Brooke Alpert, a dietitian in New York and the author of *The Diet Detox*. Some examples: chia pudding with berries for breakfast, a green salad with shrimp for lunch, and wild salmon with roasted cauliflower for dinner.

Eat smaller meals more frequently. Alpert recommends not waiting longer than four hours between meals. "Find the timing pattern that works best for you," says Rolls. If you become ravenous between meals, you need to eat more often.

Consider modified intermittent fasting. Studies have shown that intermittent fasting can have tremendous benefits, but the practice is hard to follow. Alpert suggests time-restricted feeding, when you fast for 12 to 14 hours between dinner and breakfast. "You get the metabolic boost of having an earlier dinner, and because you're sleeping while you're fasting you won't be tempted," she says.

Don't go to bed on a full stomach. Cut off eating at least two hours before bedtime to give your body time to digest, leading to better sleep, says Alpert. Most people need seven to nine hours of sleep, and too little sleep can wreak havoc on your appetite. "After just one night of sleep deprivation, your metabolism may change so that you crave more processed carbs," resulting in overeating, says Ludwig. ■