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BLOG: White Coat Notes

NUTRITION

Weekly challenge: slow your eating speed



The food court at the H Mart supermarket in Burlington. Evan McGlenn, The Boston Globe

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By

Deborah Kotz, Globe Staff

We've all heard that our brain lags behind our stomach when it comes to knowing when our hunger is satiated: It takes 20 minutes for our stomach to send full signals to our brain. Thus, we often overeat to the point of feeling overstuffed, which can cause weight gain.

Obesity experts say the key to eating less is to simply eat more slowly, but that sounds easier than it is, especially if you're used to grabbing food while on the run. Try these tips to slow your eating speed; it's a great way to challenge yourself this week.

1. Think foods in a shell. Foods that come in a shell, like lobster, nuts, or edamame, take longer to eat and give your stomach more time to process what's coming in. A study published last year in the [journal Appetite](#) found that volunteers who ate pistachios in a shell ate 41 percent fewer calories compared to those who consumed shelled pistachios --

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Daily Dose gives you the latest consumer health news and advice from Boston-area experts. Deborah Kotz is a former reporter for US News and World Report. Write her at dailydose@globe.com. Follow her on Twitter at [@debkatz2](#).

Why do some people become lactose intolerant as they age?

All of us are born with the ability to make an enzyme called lactase, which helps our small intestines digest the otherwise unwieldy sugar lactose found in milk.

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and they felt just as satisfied after their snack.

2. Place your fork and knife on the plate after every bite. The key is to chew and swallow before taking the next bite, rather than shoveling in one bite after another. This may seem strange at first, but do it enough and it will become a habit and slow your eating pace.

3. Try chopsticks even if you're not eating Chinese. You'll need to first cut your food into bite-size portions, but it's worth the extra effort. You're probably not as adept with chopsticks as you are with a fork, so you'll take in food more slowly. If you are? Switch to eating with the other hand.

4. Think soup. Soups take longer to eat and help us feel fuller. In fact, a study published in the journal [Physiology and Behavior](#) found that people tend to eat fewer calories overall on the days they eat soup compared to when they eat only solid foods. Interestingly, the satiety effect doesn't apply to liquid beverages. We usually don't feel full after, say, drinking 300 calories from a Coke, mocha latte, or margarita.

5. Practice mindful eating. Eat meals without distractions like a newspaper, television, or work report, so you can focus on the taste, texture, and smell of the food. Registering the pleasure of the food -- as well as how much you're eating -- will help you eat less. Here's a [practice exercise for increasing mindfulness](#) when you eat.

What will you do to slow your eating pace?

☐ I'm happy with my eating pace

☐ Try chopsticks

☐ Eat more soup

☐ Practice mindfulness

☐ Incorporate more foods in shells

☐ Other:

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Never mind school lunch periods, how about short lunches, if any, at work?

Seriously, the average office worker is putting in more than 8 hours a day. How is one supposed to find time to eat? Then you get to rush home and the last thing you want to do is more work? Much easier to order out or grab something on the way in.

Sorry, health gurus, but the modern world is not capable of slow. Only fast and hyper.

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