

Reasons Why You Are Always Hungry

It turns out that hunger is a pretty complicated function and is influenced by both biological and psychological factors. (And there are also the devilish foods that make you hungrier, too!) Located in this bulletin you will find some of the most common, scientifically-backed reasons why some of us are constantly ravenous. Read up so you can finally fill up and feel satisfied!

You Eat a Lot of Refined Carbohydrates

Even if you're eating something at every meal, if your day looks something like this—a cup of sugary, flaked cereal for breakfast, a slice of pizza or a sandwich on white bread for lunch, chips for a snack, either white rice or pasta for dinner, and then a chocolate chip cookie for dessert—your problem is that you're constantly fueling yourself with nutritionally-deficient refined carbs. Lacking the satiating fiber of their original form, simple and refined carbs burn up quickly in your body, which spikes your blood sugar and then causes it to crash. Low glucose levels are what triggers your hunger hormones, leaving you with a craving for more carbs.

Tip: For slow-burning, clean sources of energy, choose complex carbs such as grains like brown rice, quinoa and triticale, cruciferous vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain sprouted bread. Sprouting grains is one of the ways to get more nutrients out of your food.



You're Actually Thirsty

Did seeing that picture of water just make you forget about what you thought was a hungry tummy? A study in the journal *Physiology & Behavior* suggests people inappropriately respond to thirst over 60 percent of the time by eating instead of drinking. That's because your hypothalamus regulates hunger and thirst, and sometimes it mixes up its signals. Just sipping on H₂O is the solution to quelling your hunger pangs and, ultimately, helping you slim down. In fact, preloading meals with water can shave hundreds of calories from your daily intake. A study published in *Obesity* found that drinking two cups of water before eating led people to consume 75 to 90 fewer calories over the course of a meal.



Tip: Next time you're hankering for a snack, knock back a cup of water first and wait 20 minutes. If you're still hungry, eat something.

You're Always Stressed Out

While stress may shut down appetite in the short term—it pumps out the hormone epinephrine (also known as adrenaline) that triggers the body's fight-or-flight response and puts eating on hold—if stress persists, it's a different story. Your adrenal glands then release a different hormone called cortisol, which will not only trigger your hunger hormones, but it will also pull lipids from the bloodstream to store them in our fat cells.

Tip: You might not be able to control exactly what's happening in your life that's making you stressed, but you can control what you're putting in your body.

You're Not Getting Enough Sleep

If you feel like you're always delving into your office snack stash, you might be able to blame your lack of sleep. When you don't get enough sleep, levels of leptin (the "I'm full" hormone) drop, which in turn increases appetite and makes comfort food more appealing. Besides stimulating your appetite a lack of sufficient sleep can cause you to burn fewer calories, lack appetite control and experience an increase in cortisol levels, which stores fat.

Tip: Get the recommended 7-8 hours of shut-eye.

You Eat According to Calories, Not Nutrients

It's not calories that satiate your hunger, it's nutrients: fiber, protein, and healthy fats. Unfortunately, simple, refined carbs are lacking in all three and so are many 100-calorie snacks. And they'll just fill your body with fast, cheap calories. So no matter how much you eat, your body will go in search of more food. The result: a sluggish, hungrier you — one who's more likely to dive into the snack drawer.

Tip: Start your day with a high-protein, high-fat food like Greek yogurt, a veggie-filled omelet, or chia pudding, and you'll reduce your hunger overall.



You Eat Too Quickly

Hunger hormones take anywhere between 20 to 30 minutes to get to your brain, so if you wolf down your entire meal in under 5 minutes, you'll most likely eat more than your fill. Scientists believe it's because your hunger hormones act in a relay, passing off feelings of fullness between each other before telling your brain. This system takes some time to work, which is why it's best to eat slowly.

Tip: When your entrée arrives, dive in and eat half, then wait at least 10 minutes before coming out for round 2. While you chat and sip water, your stomach will have a chance to digest and decide whether you've had enough.

Your "Instafeed" is Loaded with Food Photos

As it turns out, scrolling through your social feeds is just as bad for your gut as seeking out those trending treats themselves. When we see photos of food, even if we're not physically in need of food, our bodies will send a signal to our brains that we want to eat. So what exactly is going on here? Scientists found that the concentration of the "hunger hormone" ghrelin increases in response to seeing food images.

Tip: Looking at those food images of oozy yolks dribbling down cheesy burgers is going to make you hungry—even if you weren't before you started scrolling—which puts you at risk of over consuming and eating the same high-energy, belly-busting foods. If you're trying to lose weight, unfollow some accounts that post images of unhealthy dishes, and start following accounts that highlight better-for-you choices: studies have found that our brains don't become as alert in response to seeing photos of low-energy, healthy foods like veggies.



You Drink Your Diet

Whether it's diet or regular, soda is one of the sugariest foods you can consume. And while many of us know sugar makes you crave sugar, artificially sweetened products and sugar alternatives (like aspartame, acesulfame K, and sucralose) can actually ramp up your appetite even more than real sugar, causing increased calorie consumption over time. According to a study in the British Journal of Nutrition, researchers found that while drinks sweetened with glucose and fructose (two components of regular table sugar) increased satiety and decreased the hunger hormone ghrelin, drinks sweetened with an artificial sweetener were not able to affect satiety hormone signaling at all.

You Drink Alcohol Often

Having a drink before a meal in the hopes it'll curb your appetite may actually be doing the opposite. Alcohol is actually one of the biggest drivers of excess food intake. A study published in the journal *Obesity* has suggested that this may be because alcohol heightens our senses. Researchers found that women who'd received the equivalent of about two drinks in the form of an alcohol infusion ate 30% more food than those who'd received a saline solution. Even mild intoxication cranked up brain activity in the women's hypothalamus regions. This made them more sensitive to the smell of food, prompting them to eat more. Not only that, but alcohol can dehydrate you, which again, may cause feelings of hunger.



Tip: Besides curbing your hunger pangs, there are many benefits to giving up or reducing the intake of alcohol, including losing weight and sleeping better. But if you're not looking to give up happy hour just yet, be sure to munch on healthy foods if you're going to eat.

You Skimp on Salads

According to the USDA's Dietary Guidelines, the average American isn't eating enough vegetables. This is an issue because most leafy greens are rich in vitamin K; a micronutrient that studies have found regulates insulin levels. Vitamin K was found to increase insulin sensitivity, which makes it easier for your body to take up sugar from your bloodstream. If your body is taking up sugar more efficiently from your bloodstream, it won't need to take more of it in through food, helping to quash your cravings. Even better, veggies are some of the most fiber-rich foods out there, and fiber is what slows the absorption of the foods we eat from the stomach into the bloodstream. In a Canadian study, researchers discovered that those whose diets were supplemented with insoluble fiber had lower levels of ghrelin.



Tip: For the best sources of insoluble fiber and vitamin K, make your salads with spinach, shaved brussel sprouts, kale, and broccoli.

Your Snacks Are in Plain View

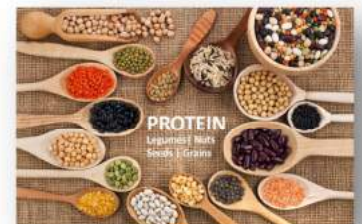
Simply reorganizing your pantry to hide any dietary kryptonite could help quell cravings. A study, conducted at the Google's New York office dubbed "Project M&M" found that placing chocolate candies in opaque containers as opposed to glass ones curbed M&M consumption by 3.1 million calories in just seven weeks. Researchers explain this is because our evolutionary "visual hunger"—the innate human desire to see images of food—has programmed our guts to release ghrelin at the mere sight of food, which can lead to false hunger.

Tip: Snacking is important for keeping your metabolism going, but that doesn't mean they should constantly be sitting on your desk. Keep snacks out of sight, and only reach for them when your tummy is rumbling.

You're Not Eating Enough Protein

Piling your plate with lean protein can help keep hunger pangs at bay. Protein takes a longer time to digest, which means it stays in your stomach and promotes feelings of fullness. But that's not all—it's also been shown to have an appetite-suppressing effect.

Tip: Besides the obvious sources of protein like meat and fish (which you can't necessarily eat all day long), load up on vegetarian sources throughout the day by sprinkling chia seeds in smoothies, eat quinoa in your granola bars, and dip carrots in hummus or apples in peanut butter.



You're Bored

Feeling hungry really can be caused by something as simple as boredom. When you're bored you actually lose your ability to make smart food choices; you become an "emotional eater. And boredom turns you into the worse kind of emotional eater, because you not only make the wrong food choices, you eat much more of those fattening foods than you normally would. In fact, "Because I'm Bored" is one of the top reasons people give when they're asked about their emotions before they eat.

Tip: You feel bored when you are dissatisfied, restless, and unchallenged. The best way to beat boredom is to find something to do that is purposeful and challenging.

You Sit All Day

Sitting all day could be a reason for your constant tummy rumbling. According to research published in the journals *Diabetes Care*, when middle-aged overweight and obese adults interrupted long periods of sitting time with short bouts of walking every 30 minutes, they were able to both minimize spikes in blood sugar and lower insulin levels after eating meals. Both mechanisms control how soon you will start to feel hunger pangs after eating. Without getting up to walk, your body may struggle to manage its glucose sensitivity, and it can lead you to feel hungry soon after noshing.

Tip: Set a timer to go off every 20 or 30 minutes during the work day to remind you to get up and walk—even if it's just going to the break room to grab a glass of water.

Your Gut Health is Off

Years of rampant antibiotic use and unhealthy eating centered on saturated fats and sugars can knock your digestive system so out of whack that it could be blunting your weight loss efforts. That's because these conditions empower the harmful bacteria that live in your gut while weakening the beneficial bugs. As a result, the good guys can't effectively do their job: part of which is regulating your hunger hormones.

Tip: To mend your tummy, cut out the bad-bug-feeding sugars from your diet, and load up on both prebiotics and probiotics. Prebiotics are a source of food for the good guys in your gut to help them build strength, and probiotics act as reinforcements, helping to drive out the bad guys. Good sources of prebiotics are legumes, onions, artichokes, spinach, and oats, and probiotics can be found in fermented foods as well as in Greek yogurt.



You Drink You're Nutrients

Smoothies and juices might be all the rage right now, but if you've ever swallowed a meal-replacement drink and felt hungry almost immediately after, here's why: Your body doesn't register liquid calories the same way as it does with solids. In fact, studies have shown that energy obtained from fluids is less satisfying than calories from solid foods, so we drink more before feeling satisfied. Experts hypothesize that the physical act of chewing increases physiological satiety responses. Whole foods are more slowly digested than liquids, a process known as gastric emptying, which causes your stomach to actually feel fuller for longer.



You Eat off Larger Plates

That set of extra-large dinnerware has to go. When you serve yourself on a bigger plate, a typical portion of food may appear smaller and can trick your brain into thinking you aren't eating enough food. Contrarily, smaller plates make food servings appear significantly larger, which tricks your mind into thinking you're about to consume more calories than you really are.

Tip: Try the trick at home by using smaller plates and glasses that make your portions look more generous. That way you'll trick your brain into feeling fuller, even though you've actually eaten less!



You Rarely Prepare Your own Food

It may be a time saver, but eating out or grabbing a processed snack from the grocery store won't help you curb your hunger pangs as much as you think. Restaurant food—even the desserts—is typically loaded with salt, which research has found can release the feel-good hormone, dopamine, making sodium-laden fare pretty addictive. As for processed junk foods? These foods are often made with appetite-revving additives like MSG, which encourage you to continue eating beyond your fill.



Tip: Try cooking a majority of your own meals and snacks at home. You'll not only be able to control the addictive sodium levels and leave out the appetite-revving additives—both will help to curb your seemingly insatiable hunger pangs—but you'll also consume nearly 200 fewer calories than those who cook less.