

FAST FACTS

Overeating

The right levels of hunger are healthful

EAT 
SLEEP
MOVE
STRESS 

Overeating refers to consuming more food, and therefore more calories, than we need to meet our daily energy requirements.

On average, a physically active person needs around 2000–2500 calories a day to meet their nutritional requirements and daily energy needs.

This will vary depending on a person's weight, muscle mass, and exercise load. When you consume more calories than you need, your body will begin to store the excess calories as body fat.

Why is overeating bad?

Overeating can lead to excess calories being stored as body fat, which leads to weight gain. If this continues for a period of time a person is likely to become overweight or obese. This can affect a person's overall metabolism and increase a person's risk for inflammatory disorders, hormone imbalances, insulin resistance, and even Type 2 Diabetes.

Overweight and obese people are also at an increased risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

Apart from weight gain, overeating also places a strain on the gut and the digestive processes, and people can begin to suffer from indigestion, bloating, altered bowel movements, and reflux, all of which can leave a person feeling unwell. People will often find they feel tired or fatigued due to the amount of energy the body has to divert to digest a large amount of food. Overeating, particularly late in the day can also start to interfere with sleep, contributing further to the sense of fatigue.

Why does someone overeat?

There are several reasons why a person may overeat. Often it is the normal habit for someone to consume large meals, and then snack in between meals. Foods that are high in refined carbohydrates and sugars, such as pasta and pasta sauce, breads, and white rice, can cause fluctuations in blood glucose levels, and when blood glucose levels fall suddenly it can trigger cravings for sweet snack foods.

In some cases, disruption to the gut microbiome can lead to overgrowth of dysbiotic yeast and bacteria which thrive on simple and refined carbohydrates. When these microorganisms are in growth phase, they can stimulate signalling to the brain to turn on cravings that can lead to binge eating.



How to prevent over eating

Some strategies to help prevent overeating include:

- Drink a small glass of water 20–30 minutes before meals. The extra water will also help with digestion
- Consciously prepare and serve up smaller portions of main meals, particularly if you are consuming foods with refined carbohydrates such as pasta
- Prepare meals from wholefoods such as fresh vegetables, lean meats, and quality fats. wholefoods contain more complex carbohydrates, fibre, protein, and good fats which help to make you feel fuller for longer
- Slow down your eating and chew your food thoroughly. This will ensure the satiety signalling reaches the brain to tell you that you've eaten enough before you overeat
- Don't consume your food while working or watching television. When you can sit and be mindful of your eating, you are less likely to overeat