



WIC **Healthy Family** Newsletter
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Eating Without Thinking

Have you ever eaten old French fries? Did you enjoy them?

Have you ever finished an entire bag of popcorn at the movie? Were you full long before you stopped eating?

Have you noticed that when you are offered a large portion of food, you are tempted to eat until it is gone, but if given a smaller portion, you eat less? Or have you noticed that you constantly eat the cookies that are left out on the kitchen counter just because you see them?

We often don't let our body tell us that we are not hungry. We eat the supersized portions we are given or the appealing food we see. We eat without thinking and we eat when we are not hungry. But we can do something about it.

Here are some tips to help you cut back on calories. These tips can help you stop the cues all around you that make you eat more than you need.

- **Replace larger bowls and cups with smaller bowls and cups.** This will make the foods you are eating look bigger. This will satisfy your mind.
- **Use small plastic bags** to divide large bags of food, such as chips into healthy portions. Take one small bag when you are hungry. You will eat less.
- **Stop eating when you are no longer hungry**, not when you are full.
- **Remember the half plate rule:** half of your plate should be vegetables. The other half should be meat and a starch like bread, rice or potatoes.

- **You do not have to clean your plate.** Despite what your mother taught you, you can leave some food. This is a good rule when eating out. Restaurants often give you more food than you need. Remember you can take some home.
- **Are you eating something you want when you are not hungry?** Say to yourself "I'm not hungry, but I'm going to eat this anyway." Making this statement will help you know that you are not eating because of hunger. Say it often. Over time it can help you limit eating when you are not hungry.
- **Do not impulse buy.** Plan your meals for the week. Make a shopping list of the foods that you need. Buy only what is on that list.
- **Do not use food to cheer up.** Good food makes everyone feel good. But food is fuel for your body; it is not the best way to make yourself happy. Play with your child, call a friend or take a walk to raise your spirits.
- **Hide the foods** that you tend to over eat. Put those foods in the back of the kitchen cabinet or the refrigerator. Out of sight is out of mindless eating.

Let your hunger be your guide for when to eat.

These tips will help you to be aware of the cues around you that make you eat too much. They will help you pay closer attention to your hunger.



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