

Ways to Keep Yourself from Overeating

Have you ever been in that awkward situation where you're full, but there's still some food on your plate—not enough to save for leftovers, but too much to toss without feeling wasteful—so you end up eating the whole thing?

Researchers have been there, too. A September 2015 review from the university of Cambridge confirmed something we've guessed for a long time: people eat more when they're offered larger portions sizes, both at home and at restaurants. But if portion sizes were smaller, U.S. adults would eat 22 to 29 percent less each day, the researchers estimated.

Unfortunately, restaurant and grocery portions may not shrink for a while—or ever—which leaves you in charge of your own overeating destiny. Here are some ways to help with overeating:

- 1. Don't worry about getting your money's worth. When it comes to eating at a restaurant, many of us think volume equals value, says Bonnie Taub-Dix, MA, RDN, CDN, author of *Read It Before You Eat It*. "When you think about it, if you eat the whole thing and really stuff yourself, then you're kind of paying for it twice: You pay for your meal with money, but then you pay for it later on with perhaps a stomach ache and extra weight."**
- 2. Make mindless eating more difficult. When other people are still eating and you're finished, it's easy to continue picking at what's on your plate even though you're not hungry anymore. "When you're done, put your silverware in your plate. Not on your plate, but literally in your plate so the handles are touching whatever food is left," Taub-Dix says. "It's not very likely you'll take them out, clean them off and start eating again."**
- 3. Avoid family-style situations. Family-style dining can be dangerous; Taub-Dix says. Instead of having a feast within reach, make sure it takes effort to get seconds. "Keep the food in the kitchen or on the counter, or even put food on your plate and wrap the rest up and put it away before you even sit down to eat," she says. "A great thing to do in restaurants is ask them to put half your meal in a to-go box—then you won't even be tempted. You're not going to dip into the part they already wrapped up and eat out of a paper bag."**
- 4. Take time to really enjoy your food. Answering email, watching TV and talking on the phone all prevent you from fully enjoying your meal and cause you to focus on the activity instead of the food that's in your mouth, Taub-Dix says. "You really miss out on a lot, from the texture and temperature to the beauty of the food."**

5. Eat on smaller plates. Investing in smaller plates to limit portion sizes can be surprisingly helpful when it comes to eating less. “Also, it’s more than just how you fill your plate, even if it’s small—it’s what you fill your plate with. Add more salad and vegetables, and spread it out so there’s less room for foods that are denser and you don’t need as much of,” Taub-Dix says.

6. Be especially careful around certain foods. It’s very easy to overeat foods that come in big quantities. “Pasta dishes, chips, salty pretzels: Not because it doesn’t fill you, but because it’s served big. When you have something like pasta with shrimp, you can count the amount of shrimp, but restaurants put them on a mountain of pasta or rice because it’s so inexpensive and makes it look big.

7. Reconsider the color of your dishes. Multiple studies have found that people who eat off of red plates eat significantly less than those who eat off of blue or white plates. Odd? Yes. Worth a try? Maybe.

8. When you do want a huge plate of food, choose wisely. Go with salad, Taub-Dix says. “Be careful with dressings and toppings—some salads are costly calorie-wise. But in all the years I’ve been in practice, I’ve never seen a patient overweight from eating too many vegetables.”