

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #74: Stopping When You're Full

Hi! So, I've been preparing and recording the last few podcast episodes several weeks ahead of time and I just realized this one is coming out on December 31st, the last day of the year! I wish I was in the spirit of the new year, but honestly, as I'm recording this, we haven't even celebrated Thanksgiving yet! So I'm just now getting into the holiday spirit! So all that being said, I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and are super excited for the new year! I'm sure I will be once the time comes, I have always loved starting a new year. It's so fun to think about all the amazingness that's going to happen and I'm sure 2020 will be no different.

So now, on to the topic I have for you today – Stopping when you're full.

When you binge, you're probably eating well past being full. You probably eat until you get too stuffed instead. You may also have times when you're eating past fullness when you're not necessarily bingeing, but just overeating. You're just eating regular meals and even though the fullness hits, you continue eating.

One of your ultimate goals is to just eat when you're hungry and stop when you're full and time and time again you've just kept eating past that point.

So why are you doing it?

I'd first question if you even recognize your fullness signal. Do you feel full and decide to continue eating or are you not even noticing that you're full until you've reached stuffed?

If you're not noticing, then that's definitely going to be the first thing you'll have to work on – paying attention to your body. Taking moments as you're eating to check in with how you feel and take a mental note.

The Fullness Scale would be useful here. You have a scale of your fullness, 1-10, one being not really feeling anything and 10 being completely stuffed, and you put a number on how you're feeling as you're eating. Where you stop on the scale is up to you, but I recommend you aim to stop around a 4 where you can tell that you're legitimately full. You know you're full and it doesn't hurt.

Taking the time to check in and put a number on it brings awareness to you of what different levels of fullness feel like for you. It's a tool to help you understand your physical feelings.

Awareness of how you're feeling really is the first step. You definitely can't stop when you're full if you don't even know that you're full.

So then once you can recognize your body's signals, do you actually trust them?

I remember back when I was a big calorie counting advocate, that it was calories that determined when I stopped eating. I remember telling my college roommate, back when I was having my first big weight loss success, that if I didn't keep track of calories then I would overeat. I used numbers to decide when I was done, not my body. This was something I went by for many many years and sometimes the numbers didn't work. That was frustrating too because I believed a certain number of calories is what would bring me to fullness, but that wasn't always the case. Sometimes my body wanted more, especially if the food I was eating wasn't filling. If I was eating 500 calories of a salad with lite dressing it probably wasn't going to be as filling as 500 calories of salad with full fat dressing and avocado and a good amount of protein. The macro nutrients make a difference when it comes to how full you feel. Not all full you up the same way.

So when you spend so many years eating based on everything but your body's signals, you lose connection with them. You're not going to trust the reliability of something that you haven't been relying on.

You haven't even given them a chance. Even if you do notice them, you don't obey them.

So really, is it your fullness signals that can't be trusted or is it you?

I'm pretty sure your body knows what is best for it. But do you? Or even more so, do you even care?

I know you have those times when you feel full and don't care. You create that apathy. I hear you all say that all the time.

You don't care how your body feels, you still want to eat. You're going to keep going anyway.

Now, that being said, there is also a chance that the hormones that dictate your fullness signals might be unbalanced and therefore aren't reliable. If you've been eating a lot of concentrated and artificial foods, then this can happen.

I know that has happened to me before, when I've been through periods of eating a lot of sugar and flour for example, that my hunger sometimes seemed physically insatiable.

And when I'm eating only whole, natural foods, then my fullness is much more noticeable and I can trust it more.

But regardless of how you're eating and how balanced your hormones are, looking for that fullness and stopping when you feel it, instead of just continuing on because you don't care about what your body wants, is going to be a useful practice to start practicing.

So, other than issues with your fullness signals, the reason why you're continuing to eat instead of stopping is because you're either feeling desire or urges to keep eating or you're trying to avoid some of other kind of feeling you don't want to feel.

You just keep thinking you want more and when you think that, you'll feel desire and urges and continue to eat more.

You want more pleasure, joy, happiness, so even though your body is telling you to stop, you're not ready to. You still want more.

Also, if you stop eating, then you're going to have to feel unanswered desire or urges or the feelings you're trying to avoid so you keep eating so you don't have to.

You keep eating past fullness because your emotional feelings are more important to you in the moment than your physical feelings.

Feeling happy is more important than treating your body well.

Feeling joy is more important than how you may feel physically in a few minutes.

Pleasure in this moment is more important than possibly feeling more pleasure for the rest of the day if you don't eat.

If you weren't so focused on wanting more and how good it tastes and how good you feel then you'd have an easier time stopping.

If you want to stop you have to stop focusing on only these things.

You have to make the decision to stop.

Think about the times when you do stop. And I don't even mean when you stop when you're full, but when you stop when you're stuffed. Why do you stop then?

It's not just because you're stuffed. People tell me they stop because they feel sick or feel too full but that's not the whole truth. It's not the full reason why you stop. You can feel sick or too full and keep eating. You could.

But at some point, you make the decision to stop eating because of that.

You stop thinking you want more and instead think about stopping.

The circumstance here is that your stomach feels the way it does, and how you think about that is what stops you.

It's the same with being hungry. Being hungry doesn't cause you to eat. It's how you think about the hunger or what you're thinking when you feel hungry. You could feel hungry for hours and not eat. You eat when you make the decision to eat.

You can feel full, stuffed even and still eat. You stop when you make the decision to stop.

You stop you and when you don't stop, it's you that's deciding to not stop.

You may have to decide to stop when you're still feeling desire, an urge, or uncomfortable feelings. You'll need to be okay with that.

If you can be okay with feeling those feelings then you'll be okay with stopping.

If you can be okay with not getting any more pleasure from food, then you'll be okay with stopping.

You're going to make the decision to stop eating at some point. Make it when you're full.

Don't tell yourself you can't stop eating, you can. You do stop, it just happens later than you'd like.

Pay attention to what your body is telling you and decide to stop when it signals for you to.

And of course, be willing to feel whatever emotions come up for you when you do.

You can stop eating when you're full. Have a fantastic week and I'll talk to you next time. Bye bye!