

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #81: Binge Eating on Healthy Foods

Hi! Are you having the best day ever?? I'm not, not the best ever, but it's still a pretty good day!

And now it's even better because I'm talking to you! And I love helping you so here we go with today's episode.

Binge eating on healthy foods.

Most people don't binge on healthy foods. When I talk to you all, you tell me you binge on chips, pizza, ice cream, cookies, baked goods, sweets, salty snacks, things you would consider unhealthy and not nutritious fueling foods.

But there are some of you that don't, or at least don't exclusively binge on the unhealthy stuff.

This is usually because you don't have the unhealthy stuff in your home and you want to binge so this is what's available. Or maybe you just don't even like the other foods and you don't even crave them so your binges consist of healthy foods because that's what you're feeling the urge for.

Now, healthy and unhealthy are completely subjective terms. I don't want you to hear me say a food and argue which it is. Obviously there's a lot almost everyone would agree on, but with all the conflicting information out there about nutrition, there are many foods that one may say is healthy while another doesn't. Is cheese healthy? Are beans? Is peanut butter? Are protein bars? Is sprouted bread? Or almond flour? Put 10 people in a room and you're going to hear different opinions, and that's totally fine. It doesn't really matter. What matters is whether or not you're using your opinion of healthy as an excuse to overeat on or binge on your healthy foods.

I remember not having unhealthy stuff in my home and there were times I was feeling the urge to eat

and I didn't want to go out and buy anything so I ate whatever I could find in my fridge and my cabinets. I remember bingeing on chickpeas, garbanzo beans. Not even roasted, just drained from a can in a Tupperware container in the fridge. I used to eat salad with them a lot so I'd typically have some ready to go. They were easy, yummy, and ready to eat so I'd go for them. I'd binge on cut up veggies, just plain. Probably not a whole binge of them, but definitely part of the equation. Then there's the healthy stuff that some may debate its healthiness given the sugar content like granola with almond milk, which I would for sure go to town on a few bowls of that. Or Lara Bars, the ones I liked had three ingredients, peanuts, salt, and dates. Then there's the popcorn. I had an air popper and I'd drizzle with olive oil and salt. Healthy right? Not if you're making bowl after bowl after bowl.

You may find yourself doing things like that too. You only keep the healthy foods in your house and you binge on those.

But is it any better than bingeing on the baked goods, the sweets, the chips and the fried foods?

Well, you could say it is better. But at the same time, it's still binge behavior.

You're still giving in to your urges. You're still teaching yourself to eat when you're not hungry and to eat whenever you feel the urge to.

You're still eating to comfort yourself, to avoid a feeling, or to escape.

Sure, a 100 calorie pack of cookies is better than a whole bag of them, but the real question is not whether it's better, but is it what you want to be doing?

Do you want to be eating whenever you feel uncomfortable? Do you want to escape yourself by eating food?

You might justify it all by saying at least it's healthy food, that it's better than bingeing on something else.

But let's be real here, eating to excess is still eating to excess.

It's still not stopping according to your body's signals to stop.

It's still eating because you want to, not because your body wants you to.

You're not learning how to not give in to urges, you're still giving in to them, just with a different food.

The typical types of binge foods are binged on because they're processed to be extremely pleasurable. Our brains love fat and sugar. They're tasty.

But whole, natural foods like veggies, fruits, unprocessed meats, nuts, seeds, are also pleasurable. Not as intensely, but still. We still enjoy eating them. We still get pleasure from eating those foods. This is how all eating was designed, as pleasurable, because if it wasn't then we wouldn't eat and we'd die.

This is why it doesn't always work to just avoid buying your common binge foods. You'll find something that's somewhat pleasurable to eat. If you are prone to eating in response to binge urges, then you will find something when you feel that urge.

It may not be as satisfying because you're not getting such a huge surge of pleasure, but you think it's better than nothing.

You think it's better than just feeling that urge.

Now, maybe you don't notice negative consequences from overeating and bingeing on the healthier foods. But some things you may notice is continuing to feel urges to binge, feeling way too full, being gassy, not losing weight, or decreased energy. Again, eating too much is still eating too much and is more than your body wants to handle in one sitting or when it's not even wanting food.

Overeating is overeating and bingeing is bingeing.

If you're choosing healthier foods, you're still engaging in the behavior just with a different substance.

If you are conditioned to feel an urge to binge when you get home from work, and you decide to eat carrots instead of a whole bag of pretzels, you're still eating in response to an urge, and therefore not conditioning yourself to not want to eat when you get home. You're still teaching your brain that when you get home after a stressful day, you eat. This is what you do.

It's kinda like when people stop smoking or drinking and then end up overeating. They were drinking or smoking in response to urges or in response to their emotions, and they never learned how to process through them properly so they found a new outlet. Food.

Whether it's healthy or unhealthy, you're still not processing through your urges and feelings.

Is that something you want to be doing?

It's completely up to you. If you're okay with the results you get from bingeing on healthy foods or even overeating on them, if you don't see any negative consequences, then I'm not going to try and stop you. You do what you want. Really.

But if you're not okay with the results of doing it, you gotta feel that discomfort and choose discomfort over eating.

You gotta stop making excuses about how it's healthy so it's okay.

And really, just stop making excuses and justifications all over the place! Know what your true self wants to do and do that.

Have a great week and I'll talk to you next time, bye bye!