

# 5 Pitfalls That Lead to Overeating and What to Do About Them



Everyone knows what it feels like after you overindulge. You might be sluggish, bloated, queasy or a combination of all three. It's normal to occasionally overdo it, but if you're experiencing these classic **overeating side effects** on a regular basis, it may be time to understand why.

Here are five common pitfalls that lead to overeating, plus tips on how to curb the habit:

## **1. MINDLESS EATING AT SOCIAL EVENTS**

When you're trying to fit in at a party or other social gathering, the food table often serves as a safe zone. Eating gives you something to do, but hovering over the cheese board or bowl of chips and guac the entire night is an easy way to overindulge.

“If you’re not hungry, don’t spend time at a party **mindlessly noshing**,” says dietitian Amy Gorin, owner of Amy Gorin Nutrition. If, however, you’re actually hungry, she suggests scanning the buffet table first so you can make smart decisions about what you want.

“Grab a small plate, fill up a third to half of it with the food you set your eyes on, then pile the rest with fruit and veggies,” she advises.

## 2. NOT GETTING THE RIGHT NUTRIENTS

If you consistently find yourself overeating despite your best intentions, you may not be loading up on the right foods.

“A lunchtime entree salad with just veggies isn’t going to fill you up,” Gorin says. “If you don’t add some filling ingredients to your salad, you’re going to get hungry very quickly and potentially overeat because of that,” she explains.

Conversely, eating too many refined carbs — like white bread, pasta or sugar — can also cause you to overeat.

“Refined carbs may initially provide an energy boost,” says dietitian Jennifer Glockner, creator of **Smartee Plate**. “However, an insulin spike may lead to a sugar crash, which will make you hungry [again], so you will eat too soon.”

To feel satiated for longer, Gorin recommends incorporating **protein- and fiber-rich** foods, like chickpeas or lentils, into your meals.

### 3. MISJUDGING PORTION SIZES

It's easy to overeat if you don't know how much you should be eating. Of course, **portion sizes** vary for each individual depending on factors like age and activity level, but there are some general guidelines you can follow to create a healthy, balanced meal.

To start, Glockner suggests filling half your plate with fruits and veggies and the other half with a serving of lean protein and whole grains.

### 4. SKIMPING ON PRODUCE



You could be overeating as a result of “not eating your water,” or in other words, not incorporating enough fruits and veggies into your meals, Gorin says.

“Produce has a high water content, and this water can help fill you up for not so many calories,” she explains. “In fact, studies show that when you have a salad before a meal, **this helps you eat less** of that meal.”

Focus on adding fruits and veggies to your diet wherever you can. Top your French toast with fresh blueberries, for example, or pair your string cheese with cherry tomatoes or carrots.

## 5. GETTING TOO HUNGRY

“Being overly hungry may lead to overeating,” Glockner says. When your stomach is empty, you’re more likely to make poor food decisions and reach for convenient options, she says, many of which tend to be processed, fatty or filled with sugar.

To avoid the state of hunger that compels you to tear through a party-size bag of tortilla chips, Glockner recommends eating regular meals and small, **healthy snacks** in between.

“Even before going out, **have a small snack** to avoid being overly hungry and overeating,” she says. Try a couple of whole-grain crackers or a handful of nuts and piece of fruit.