

Slow Your Eating Pace

Chew, chew, chew your food!

Chewing is the first step in digestion, but it's also one of the most overlooked. Often, our modern lifestyles demand that we speed through our meals. Taking time to pay attention to how you are eating your food, not just what you are eating, is an important step in making the transition to better whole body health.

When chewing our food, we mechanically break it down into small pieces. Chewing mixes food with our saliva which contains important digestive enzymes. These digestive enzymes get to work as soon as we bite into our food and start breaking it down. You can think of digestion like an assembly line and chewing is the first step. If that first step is not done properly, this affects all the following steps and the end result may not be ideal.

When we don't chew our food thoroughly, it complicates every other step in digestion. Our bodies may have a harder time absorbing the nutrients from our food and the digestion process may not feel as smooth as it could. This can result in you experiencing acid reflux, heartburn, bloating, or indigestion.



Chewing your food:

- Breaks food down into small pieces
- Mixes food with our saliva which contains important digestive enzymes
- Helps us slow down our eating rate

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By chewing thoroughly and slowing down your eating, you will find:

- You are more likely to stop eating before you are past the point of fullness
- Your digestion will improve
- You will absorb more of the nutrients from your food

Try these approaches to slow down your eating:

20-Minute Rule

It takes your stomach 20 minutes to get the message of being comfortably full to your brain. The quicker you eat, the more calories you will take in during those 20 minutes, and the more likely you are to end up over-full and uncomfortable.

Try this:	Desired outcome:
Set a timer	Make meals last for 20 minutes
Turn off the TV, step away from your work	Reduce distractions
Count how many times you chew each bite (try to chew each bite 20 times)	Thoroughly chew your food
Put your fork down between bites	Slow down your meals
Take a few deep breaths in between bites	Take a few moments to check in on your fullness throughout the meal
Check in with your hunger/fullness level after 5 minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes	Gives time for assessing: How hungry am I? How full am I? How is this food tasting? Am I enjoying this meal?