

Celebrate! *A Healthy You*

A newsletter devoted to helping individuals of every size live in a healthy body.

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Understanding Eating Issues: Hunger, Appetite, Fullness, Satiety

To many people 'healthful eating' is just another way to say 'diet'. In their minds, this is just code for 'give up what you like' or 'eat stuff that is good for you but tastes bad.'

That may be true for some of what is printed in newspapers, magazines or on the Internet and what is heard on news reports or elsewhere in the media. It may even be true for some of what is taught by well-meaning nutrition and health professionals. However, the aim of *Celebrate! A Healthy You* is to offer a different view of healthful eating, a non-diet way of looking at eating.

To understand non-diet healthful eating, it is helpful to think about four words, the meaning of those words and how they relate to one another. Those four words are hunger, appetite, fullness and satiety.

Hunger is discomfort, pain or weakness caused by a need for food. It is a physical sensation in the stomach caused by changes in certain body chemicals. Hunger can range from mild, meaning you could eat but it is easy to put it off, to so strong that you are desperate to eat.

Such extreme hunger can make a person feel empty, uneasy, shaky, tired, or even cause headaches. At this level, hunger can be very powerful and drive us to eat food that we may not enjoy just to satisfy the urge to eat. Hunger like this can happen when people do not have enough money to buy the food they need. It can also when people diet, or do not do a good job of planning meals and snacks.

Moderate hunger before a meal makes eating it more enjoyable. Spacing meals about every 4-6 hours apart during the day with snacks no closer than an hour before a meal allow hunger to become noticeable. This rhythm of moderate hunger buildup followed by eating provides a sense of security and trust in oneself.

Appetite is a desire or craving for food in general or some specific food. This craving or desire can happen even when we are not hungry. Seeing, smelling, or simply talking or reading about food can stimulate the appetite. Think about a

time when you walked by a bakery and smelled the aroma of bread baking. Did your mouth begin to water, and were you tempted to go in and buy something?

For many people appetite takes longer to satisfy than hunger. Sometimes it is said that it takes the brain 15 minutes to recognize the stomach's fullness.

Actually, the brain is in communication with the stomach just as much as any other part of the body. The stomach's fullness and the satisfaction of appetite can be independent of each other.

If appetite has not been satisfied, the desire to eat will continue. This is a normal part of eating and not a cause for alarm. If appetite is routinely misunderstood or denied because of dieting or poor nutrition advice, fear and mistrust of oneself can result. Once someone fears they won't stop eating in response to fullness cues, they lose trust in the signals sent by their own body. Over time, the ability to feel hunger and fullness can become confused and distorted.

Fullness, like hunger is connected to a physical sense. It means the stomach has been filled and hunger is gone. Also like hunger, there are different levels of fullness.

Extreme fullness might be described as being stuffed. For most of us, this is not a pleasant feeling, maybe even painful. Eating another bite is repulsive. Eating to this point may bring feelings of disgust or shame. Uncomfortable fullness can happen accidentally like at Thanksgiving or when served a large meal at a restaurant. It can also happen when hunger has gotten so intense that food is gobbled up and the point of comfort is passed without notice. Someone who has an eating disorder may often eat to this degree of fullness.

A more moderate level of fullness might be described as a pleasant feeling of being filled up. It is a bit more than satisfied, a sense that the stomach is completely filled. Eating to this point can happen when food tastes really yummy, or you don't want to hurt someone's feelings by turning down second helpings. Someone who diets often may eat to this point of fullness when not on a diet because they have lost touch with the more subtle signs of fullness.



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Make Cooking Simple

Pasta is on the menu this month. Many of us turn to pasta when we want an easy, quick and inexpensive meal. For speed and ease, it is hard to beat spaghetti tossed with a little olive oil and parmesan cheese. Or, open a jar of your favorite sauce to heat while the pasta cooks. Add a simple salad, and crusty bread, and your meal is ready to serve in about 15 minutes.

Jars of sauce are a great convenience, but can be high in sodium. **Quick and Easy Tomato Sauce** is well named, and costs about \$1.20 for four servings. Sodium content stays low too, and can be reduced further by using no-salt added tomatoes. This light-bodied sauce will be more like a traditional tomato sauce with the addition of a 6 ounce can of tomato paste as noted in one of the variations listed below the recipe.

See this month's handout for tips on buying and cooking pasta, as well as more tasty recipes.

Quick and Easy Tomato Sauce

½ tablespoon olive oil or vegetable oil	1 15-oz. can chopped tomatoes*
½ cup chopped onion	1 teaspoon dried basil
1-2 cloves garlic, minced	½ teaspoon dried oregano



Heat oil over medium heat in saucepan. Add onion and sauté for about 3 minutes until tender. Add garlic and cook for another minute but do not let garlic burn. Stir in tomatoes, basil and oregano and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for at least 5 minutes or longer to let flavors blend. Makes about 2 cups of sauce, enough for 4 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 46 calories, 7g carbohydrate, 1.5g fiber, 2g fat, 174mg sodium. *Use no-salt-added tomatoes to reduce sodium to 15g per serving.

Variations:

For thicker sauce, add one 6-oz. can tomato paste plus 1/3 cup water along with tomatoes and herbs.

For meat sauce, eliminate the oil and start by cooking ½ pound ground meat with onion. Cook until meat is no longer pink. Or, start with a packet of Make Ahead Browned Meat (instructions printed in the March issue), and eliminate onion and oil. When meat is hot, add garlic, then proceed with recipe as written above.

Other vegetables may be added if desired. Add sliced mushrooms, chopped green and red bell peppers or others to the onions and oil. Increase sauté time as needed so vegetables are tender.

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Satiety is the point where both appetite and hunger have been satisfied. It is a comfortable place to stop eating. Food no longer tastes as good as it did, and interest in eating is less.

No one can be a perfect eater, always eating only when hungry and stopping at just the right mouthful when hunger is gone and appetite is satisfied. However, we can be normal eaters who trust ourselves to eat well. Normal eaters

- permit themselves to eat
- are hungry when starting to eat
- let their appetite guide eating
- are reliable in having regular meals and snacks
- savor their food and eat in a mindful way most of the time.

Top 10 Reasons to be Active



10. Improve sleep quality
9. Build muscle mass
8. Strengthen the heart
7. Increase aerobic capacity
6. Strengthen bones
5. Improve blood sugar control
4. Control blood pressure
3. Reduce anxiety, stress and depression
2. Increase energy levels
1. **Enjoyment**—it feels good to move your body!