



HIGH-SATIETY EATING

Many people still believe you need to starve to lose weight. Not true! High-satiety eating is all about enjoying nutrient-dense foods that are low in calories but keep you feeling full for longer.

 **BY CHARIS TORRANCE**

Who has time to count calories? Nobody, that's who.

What happens nearly all of the time is that eating less makes you feel hungry and deprived, which leads to the inevitable binge. Eating less is just not sustainable for most of us, but high-satiety eating could be the answer you're looking for. Elzette Struwig, registered dietician and owner of Metabolica Med, and Anri van Rooyen, registered holistic health counsellor and co-owner of Ariani Health Solutions and the Weight Control Clinic, explain how including foods with a higher-satiety index will help curb cravings and help you reach your weight-loss goals.

Let's break down high-satiety eating

We know all foods are not equal, which is why calorie restriction cannot work in the long run: 300 calories from salmon won't have the same effect on your body as 300 calories from cake. You are more likely still to be hungry after eating the slice of cake than you would be after eating the salmon. So, in

a nutshell, high-satiety eating is about eating smarter: getting all your nutrient needs and feeling full – while limiting calories.

'High-satiety eating is a term used to describe an eating plan focused on eating foods that provide a sense of fullness and satisfaction,' Elzette says. These foods have a high-satiety index and, because eating higher-satiety foods can help you feel fuller for longer, they reduce your urge to snack. Moreover, because you don't feel deprived, you don't feel the urge to binge-eat either. All this means improved weight management and, more importantly, because high-satiety foods are nutrient-rich, improved overall health.

The science supports this theory. High-satiety foods are high in fibre, protein and healthy fats, and exclude things that are high in sugar and refined carbohydrates. 'The reason they make you feel fuller for longer is because these types of foods take longer to digest and provide a slow release of energy, as opposed to empty calories,' Anri says. By empty calories, we mean foods that have little nutritional value, like sugary drinks, snacks and desserts. We've all at some point gorged on fast food, only

to find ourselves hungry again an hour later.

'These foods may provide an initial burst of energy but they do not offer the same sense of fullness and satisfaction as high-satiety foods,' Elzette says. 'This is because they're quickly digested and metabolised, leading to a rapid rise and fall in blood sugar levels, and an increased likelihood of overeating and snacking.'

Just because something is high in calories it does not mean it will leave you satisfied. On the other hand, when you're eating foods that provide your body with the nutrients it needs, you *are* more likely to feel satisfied.

'Not only that, but foods high in healthy fats, like nuts, avocado and olive oil, are slow-digesting energy sources that provide a sustained release of energy and help to regulate leptin levels, which is an important hormone that regulates hunger and metabolism,' Elzette adds.

The goal with high-satiety eating is to reduce your calorie intake naturally and to stop your cravings for high-energy-dense, high-calorie foods, to eliminate hunger, and to stop the need for more calories to meet your nutritional demands.



➤ *What are the benefits?*

Food affects our emotions, hormones and hunger. As you might expect, eating foods that are nutrient-rich can help with all those things.

‘Eating more protein and fibre while avoiding high-reward foods (foods that taste good but don’t offer any real nutrients) will lead to weight loss and better weight management, and reduce your risk of obesity and chronic lifestyle diseases,’ Anri says. And, when you aren’t white-knuckling it while waiting for your next meal – as you would with a calorie-restrictive diet – you have more self-control and are less likely to break down and binge-eat.

When you include high-satiety foods in your diet, by definition you’re making sure you’re getting enough important nutrients, Elzette says. ‘When you eat high-satiety foods, you reduce the risk of chronic health problems, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer, by controlling your hunger, regulating your blood sugar levels and improving your nutrient intake.’

High-satiety foods reduce cravings, Anri says, as you feel satisfied after eating them, and therefore you are less likely to reach for unhealthy snacks. They also help regulate your blood sugar levels, because they’re usually low-glycaemic foods, which will help to keep your energy levels steady.



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➤ *What’s the catch?*

As with anything, moderation is key. ‘It’s important to choose high-satiety foods that you can control yourself around,’ Anri cautions. ‘If you have a particular weakness for shrimp, maybe don’t include it in your diet, as it may lead to overeating and weight gain.’ Eating too much of any food can cause you to become too full, leading to digestive issues such as abdominal discomfort and bloating. Additionally (and scarily), eating too much can make you become resistant to the satiety hormone, which means it becomes harder for you to feel full and satisfied, leading to increased hunger and cravings. When you follow the high-satiety model, you’re eating good food, yes, but it’s still important to

monitor your portions and to pair high-satiety foods with other healthy food choices to maintain a balanced diet.

Another concern can be the cost. Compared with unhealthy, processed (and ‘easy’) foods, high-satiety eating can be expensive, especially when it comes to buying avocados, nuts and lean proteins. But you need to look at the bigger picture: ‘You have to remember that the long-term benefits of high-satiety eating, such as improved weight management and reduced risk of chronic health problems, far outweigh the short-term cost,’ Elzette says. ‘There are also ways to make high-satiety eating more affordable, such as buying in bulk, buying seasonal produce, and preparing meals at home.’

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➤ *Will it work for you?*

High-satiety eating is beneficial for most people, regardless of age, health status or lifestyle, Elzette says. 'Whether you're trying to manage your weight, regulate your blood sugar levels, maintain stable energy levels, improve digestion, or simply promote overall health and wellbeing, high-satiety eating can provide many benefits.'

High-satiety eating can also be the key to unlocking weight loss for people who have tried to lose weight before, with disappointing results, in particular those who have trouble controlling their hunger. 'And this includes people who have hit a plateau and have stopped seeing any further improvement,' Anri says.

High-satiety eating sits very comfortably with LCHF, keto and intermittent fasting. 'There are also plenty of vegan and vegetarian options,' Anri says. 'High-satiety works with these lifestyle choices and adds another degree of efficacy.'

Is there anyone who wouldn't benefit from high-satiety eating? Well, if low-carb, keto or IF is already working for you, then there's no real need to change it. 'If you are hitting your goals and maintaining your metabolic health, then there's no need to introduce more high-satiety foods into your diet,' Anri says. Why mess with a good thing? And, of course, don't just swing into it if you have any existing

health conditions. 'If you've been diagnosed with a chronic disease, any changes to your lifestyle should be discussed with your doctor first.'

'I always tell my clients that healthy eating shouldn't be a punishment. You can eat healthily *and* enjoy it.' And high-satiety eating proves this.

➤ *High-satiety foods that are keto- and LCHF-friendly*

Of course, satiety itself as a concept is subjective. Being satisfied looks different for different people. But when it comes to identifying foods that score high on the satiety index, there are several properties to look out for. 'They include a high fibre and protein content, a low glycaemic index, high water content, and healthy fats,' Elzette says.

It has less to do with the calories and more to do with wholefoods from plants and animals that have undergone little or no processing, Anri adds.

- **Almonds** are a prime example of a high-satiety food. They are high in calcium, fibre and healthy fats. 'This combination of nutrients makes almonds a filling and satisfying food that can help control hunger and promote overall health and wellbeing,' Elzette says.
- **Avocados** are high in healthy fats and fibre.
- **Eggs** are high in protein and healthy fats.
- **Fatty fish** is an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids. In fact, fish



has a higher satiety score than any other protein-rich foods, including eggs and beef.

- **Soup** is known to be more filling than a solid meal containing the same ingredients.
- **Lean beef** is high in protein.
- **Nuts** are full of healthy fats and protein.
- **Coconut** contains a lot of healthy fats and fibre.
- **Cheese** is a great source of protein and healthy fats.
- **Olives** are high in healthy fats and fibre.
- **Leafy greens** such as spinach and kale are high in fibre and low in carbohydrates. ❖