

# Satiety

Satiety is the absence of hunger. Children feel satiated when they eat a meal or snack and get their energy back, having soothed that empty feeling in their bellies.

## Signs that children have reached satiety

- ▶ They start playing with their food.
- ▶ They slow down their pace of eating.
- ▶ They want to get up from the table.

## Factors that influence satiety

- ▶ The foods served. A heavy meal lengthens satiety. A light meal shortens satiety.
- ▶ The amount of time that has elapsed since the last food eaten. After three hours, it is likely that satiety will diminish and hunger will start to creep up.

## Encourage children to stop themselves when they've had enough.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Starving	Very hungry	Hungry	A little hungry	Just right	Full	Too full

The right time to stop eating is when we feel we've reached level 4, meaning we feel "just right." Here are a few tips to help children figure out how they feel and if they've had enough to eat, before they get "full" or "too full."

- ▶ Encourage children to eat slowly.
- ▶ Give them at least 25 minutes to eat.
- ▶ Allow and even encourage children to stop eating when they aren't hungry anymore, even if they still have food.
- ▶ Ask children how they feel after the meal and how they know they have eaten enough.
- ▶ Avoid activities that distract them during meals (e.g., screens and games).
- ▶ Encourage them to chew their food well and take their time eating so they can savour each bite.

## Do or don't?

- ▶ **Don't** interfere with children and their hunger and satiety signals. Don't make comments that encourage children to eat more or less than they want.
- ▶ **Do** be aware of children's ability to pay attention to their own signals and meet their own needs. Let them decide how much they eat.

## Is it normal to be hungry 30 minutes after a meal?

It is normal to be hungry three hours after a meal. If we get hungry too quickly after a meal, we need to look at why. The causes can be as diverse as the solutions! Feel free to share the list below.

Causes	Solutions
Morning snack is too close to lunch, making them less hungry for lunch.	Suggest having snack earlier or eating something lighter (e.g., a piece of fruit).
The child drank a lot while they ate or had a very brothy soup for lunch.	Suggest drinking a little less during meals and more between them. Serve more hearty soups for meals.
The meal was not filling enough. It was missing foods or the portions were too small.	Give them enough food in their meals. Have them help make their own lunch.
The meal was not hearty enough. It was missing more filling foods that digest slowly.	Include more filling foods, like meat, chicken, tofu, eggs, legumes, fish, whole grain bread or pasta, yogurt or cheese.
The child was not concentrating on their meal or didn't have much of an appetite (e.g., arguments or worry).	Create a pleasant environment that is calm and not too noisy. Dim the lights. Talk with the child to make sure everything is OK.
They might be in a hurry to go play, take care of a special task or simply receive praise for finishing quickly.	Remind the children that meals are not a race. Encourage them to eat at their own pace. Avoid giving children who finish early any sort of task, as it can make them want to rush through a meal.