Chew on This

It takes time for your brain to realize your stomach is full.

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Here’s a well-documented scientific fact: Chewing triggers the digestive process. That said, when we chew our food instead of gulping it down, we also reap multiple benefits from properly digesting a meal.

When we chew food well—at least 32 to 40 times, some experts suggest—digestive enzymes in saliva start to break down what we’re eating. This slurry of swallowed food particles mixed with saliva eventually makes its way to the stomach where CCK (cholecystokinin), a chemical hormone, is released and sent to the brain to signal that we’re no longer hungry. At the same time, levels of ghrelin, a hormone that stimulates the brain to boost appetite, drop.

Voilà! Your body just regulated how much food you should eat. Of course, weight management isn’t this simple. But many nutrition experts believe chewing food longer slows down the eating process and allows us to fully savor our food, and this helps to stop us from overeating.

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