

The Done Bingeing

PODCAST

EPISODE 49: SPECIAL SERIES—12 KEYS TO END BINGE EATING, KEY #7: UNLEARN THE DESIRE TO OVEREAT (VII)

What does a book on a bookshelf have to do with your hormones? Keep listening!

Welcome to *The Done Bingeing Podcast*. This is the place to hear about how you can pair the emerging brain science about why you binge with powerful life coaching to help you stop. If you want to explore a non-clinical approach to end binge eating, you're in the right place. It's time to free yourself. You have more power than you know. And now, your host, Life and Weight-Loss Coach Martha Ayim.

Welcome to Episode 49 of *The Done Bingeing Podcast* and to part 15 of this special series, *12 Keys to End Binge Eating*. We've been talking about the seventh key: Reduce the Desire to Overeat. So far, we've talked about emotional, conditioned, and neurological factors that influence our eating. In the last episode, we set the stage to talk about hormonal factors by exploring what genuine physical hunger and fullness actually feel like.

In this episode, we're beginning to explore how hormones affect our hunger and fullness signals.

Hormones are an important factor to consider in overeating because they play critical roles in when we feel hungry and when we feel full—not to mention how fat gets stored and released in our bodies.

The reason we're going into detail here is because a central part of resolving bingeing and overeating is about reducing hunger and desire for food to natural states so that you can eat normally. We do that by focusing on three things: by understanding how certain foods scramble your hunger and fullness signals and how they escalate desire for more food than you need; by planning to eat nutritionally rich foods that fuel your body; and by applying laser coaching to everything else.

Over the next few episodes, we're going to continue to talk about all of this, including the three hormones: ghrelin, leptin, and insulin.

If you're bingeing or overeating, you're eating more food than you need, so it's important to look into how hormones regulate your hunger, regardless of whether excess weight is an issue for you. It's hard to normalize eating if your hunger and fullness signals are whacked.

Ghrelin and leptin are two main hormones influencing your hunger and fullness signals. We're going to dive into ghrelin first.

Ghrelin is a hormone that stimulates hunger. It's primarily secreted in your stomach when it's empty. From there, ghrelin enters your bloodstream, crosses your blood-brain barrier, and sends a message to your hypothalamus that you are hungry (Inui, 2001; Klok, Jakobsdottir, & Drent, 2007).

When you remember that your stomach probably grumbles and growls when you get hungry, G for ghrelin kind of makes sense.

Your ghrelin levels are higher before eating and lower after eating. The higher your ghrelin level, the hungrier you'll feel, the more you'll likely eat.

If you're hoping to eat less, you going to want less ghrelin floating around, so that you don't feel as hungry as often. Ideally, you only want to secrete ghrelin when you really need fuel. But that may not be what's happening if your ghrelin secretion is influenced by conditioning or by eating highly refined food.

How is ghrelin release conditioned? Well, let's say, you start eating according to a program's insistence that you have three meals and three snacks at predictable times each day regardless of whether you're hungry. Soon, at those times, your stomach will begin to make ghrelin, telling you it's time to eat, regardless of whether your body genuinely needs food for fuel.

So, in the end, you may be being sent hunger signals that's aren't based on your true fuel needs but instead are based on how your eating patterns have conditioned your ghrelin release. That's why we spent time exploring conditioned eating and why you eat at the times you do.

But that's not all. The more highly processed foods and drinks you consume, the more ghrelin you'll release in your stomach.

Ultra-artificially concentrated foods and drinks like those high in sugar and those made with refined carbohydrates like flour scramble your body's hunger signals, in part because ghrelin doesn't recognize caloric density. What's more, after you eat high-sugar foods, your dopamine response will likely send cravings and urges to beg you for more.

The more calorically concentrated your food, the less pressure you'll feel on your stomach wall, the longer it will take for your ghrelin levels to go down, the longer you're going to feel hungry.

For example, suppose you had three ounces of sautéed salmon on a bed of two cups of field greens drizzled with two tablespoons of full-fat dressing, with half a cup of quinoa as a side. Volume-wise, that would be roughly three cups; calorie-wise, that would be about 450 calories. Now, compare that to three cups of cookie dough ice cream. Although that's three cups of food, it's more than 1500 calories. Cup for cup, the cookie dough ice cream—made with a large amount of sugar and containing refined flour—is a more calorically concentrated food than the salmon meal.

Is the moral of the story to count calories? No. We just did that to make a broad-strokes comparison.

Is the moral of the story to drop a program with three meals and three snacks a day if you feel it's totally working for you? No. But my guess is that you wouldn't be listening to this podcast if it really was totally working for you.

Is the moral of the story never to eat cookie dough ice cream? No. But it's helpful to understand how your choices impact multiple systems in your body that can then swing back around to affect your choices. That way, you get to discern what works for you and what doesn't work for you and why.

Eating whole foods, including plenty of healthy fats, vegetables, and fruits, and an adequate amount of protein will help you clarify your hunger signals in part because these foods take up more volume in your stomach when you eat them and are high in fiber and nutrients, despite being lower in calories. They also help you to access your body's wisdom about how much you really need to eat.

Your body knows exactly how much food it needs. When you eat naturally occurring foods, your body knows how to process those foods, and your hormones stay more balanced and able to signal hunger more clearly.

When we release more ghrelin than we need because of eating highly concentrated foods, we are essentially creating false hunger.

Do you remember the false bookshelf in a good-old mystery? Maybe it was Poirot who pulled the book that triggered the shelf to swing 'round. Or maybe it was the haughty Holmes or the comical Clouseau. Whoever it was, the swing often deposited them in a cryptic cavern with no reference points.

The bookshelf looked real enough and there were some real books on it, too.

The ice cream looks real enough and parts of it are made from whole foods, too.

But pull the book and lift the spoon and, behind both, may be more than you bargained for.

That's it for Episode 49. Thank you for listening! If you're ready to apply the concepts in this podcast at a deeper level, sign up for a free private coaching session at www.holdingthespace.co/book. I'm only able to offer a limited number of free sessions per month and the spots fill up pretty quickly. So, reserve yours now, before it's gone.

Thanks for listening to *The Done Bingeing Podcast*. Martha is a certified life and weight loss coach who's available to help you stop bingeing. Book a free session with her at www.holdingthespace.co/book. And stay tuned for next week's episode on freeing yourself from binge eating and creating the life you want.

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