

On Nutrition: Too much of a good thing

April 22 2022, by Barbara Intermill



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"I need to reschedule my appointment today," a pained voice informed my answering machine. "I'm not feeling so good...maybe I shouldn't have eaten that whole bag of grapes."

When I called this patient—who is working hard to replace [fresh fruit](#)

for her usual candy bar snacks—she explained further.

"I was playing on the [computer](#) and before I knew what was happening, the entire 2-pound bag of grapes was empty."

I've been there...like when a large box of popcorn suddenly disappears during a good movie.

It's called "mindless eating"—not being aware of what, why or how much we consume. It usually happens when we're distracted. And it can occur with healthful foods as well as those we run to for comfort.

To her credit, this [woman](#) ingested a good dose of dietary fiber that promotes gut health. She also got almost half her daily need for potassium—a nutrient that helps keep blood pressure under control. Grapes of all colors are also brimming with antioxidants and other substances that may benefit our hearts, brains and joints, according to the California Table Grape Commission. (99% of the table grapes in the US are produced in the Golden State.)

Unfortunately, compared to just 90 calories in an average serving of grapes, this woman's [grape](#) binge cost her more than 600 calories.

There are two issues here. First, when we eat, we need to pay attention—what some call "mindful eating." Enjoy every bite. Take the time to appreciate food's taste and texture. When I do this, I'm surprised that a small box of popcorn can be just as satisfying as a whole tub.

Remember too, that—whether it's grapes or [olive oil](#) or a good steak—we really can get too much of a good thing. Like the ah-ha I heard from a patient years ago, "I get it! It's all about portion sizes!"

For example, 3/4 cup (about 17 grapes) is considered a serving.

Nutrition experts advise most of us to consume 2 to 3 servings of fruit each day for [good health](#).

Two pounds of grapes might be a reasonable serving for a bear, but for humans, it translates to 7 servings of fruit; a bit excessive.

Grapes are still a great snack, however. Look for bunches with green, pliable stems and plump berries. Choose all colors! And don't be afraid if you see a powdery-white coating on your grapes. That's "[bloom](#)"—a [natural substance](#) that protects grapes from moisture and decay.

Store unwashed grapes in the refrigerator and they should keep for up to two weeks. Rinse before eating, of course.

And here's the rule for grapes and other fruit if you have diabetes: One serving at a time. That's probably a good rule for all of us, come to think of it.

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