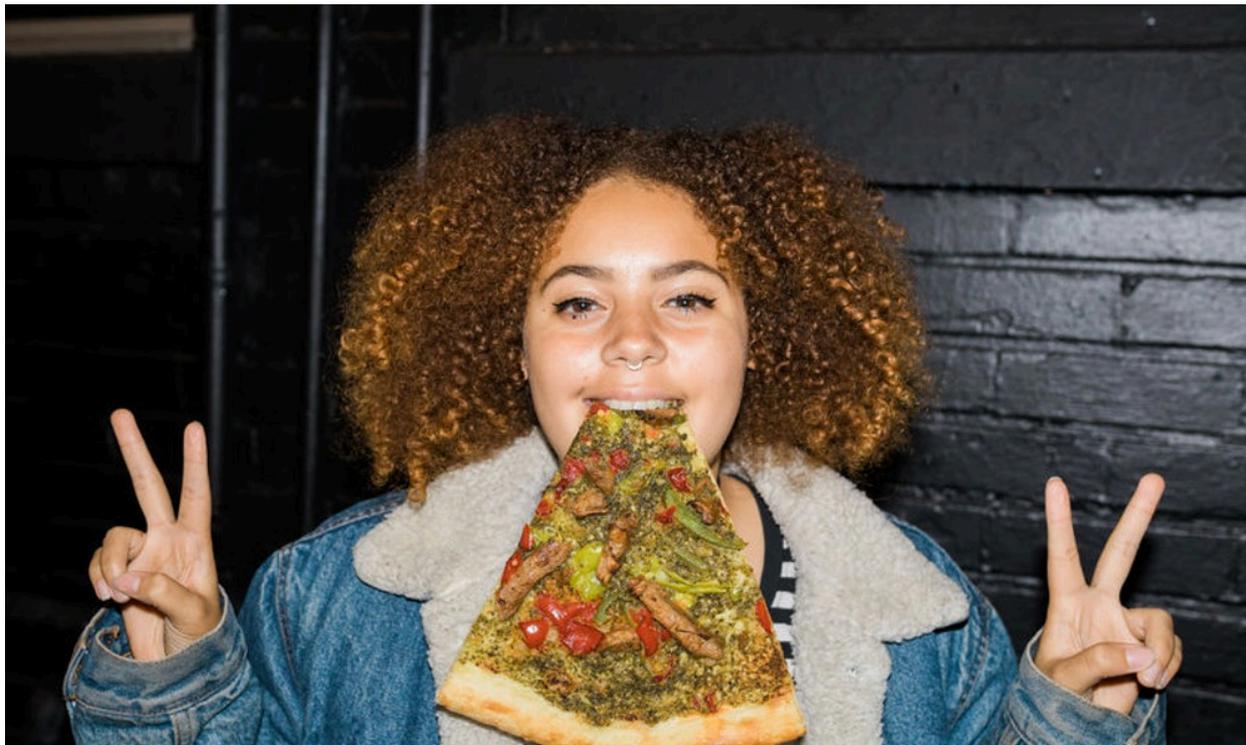


The Best Time To Eat Lunch Isn't As Important As What You Actually Eat, Says A Nutritionist

By [Annakeara Stinson](#) July 22, 2018



[Jesse Morrow/Stocksy](#)

You know that feeling in the afternoon, often after you have lunch, where you're just freaking exhausted and wouldn't mind a quick cat nap under your desk? Well, it's really not an uncommon phenomenon to be on the sleepy side of things in the afternoon after you eat. I mean, the siesta exists in so many parts of the world for a reason, right? But since we don't always have time to fit in a nap during the day (or like, ever), figuring out the best time to have lunch, and what to actually eat, can help combat your post-meal fatigue so you can have that productive, wide-eyed afternoon you've always dreamed about.

According to [Dr. Daryl Gioffre](#), a nutritionist and author of the book [Get Off Your Acid](#), a huge factor in fighting those afternoon sleepy feels is timing. In order to keep your energy levels thriving throughout the day, he says it's best to pop out for lunch between about 12:30 and 1 p.m., and to avoid snacking too much in the late afternoon.

However, Dr. Gioffre also points out that the time you eat lunch, or even the time you snack, isn't going to matter as much as the *quality* of the foods you eat, especially when it comes to being bright-eyed and bushy-tailed during the latter half of the day. You guessed it: That white bread sandwich with Skittles on the side, and the 12 p.m. iced coffee you can't help but order, might satisfy a craving or temporarily give you energy, but as for staying fueled throughout the rest of your day, your body's going to need something a little more substantive.

According to Dr. Gioffre, carbs, sugars, and grains can all be huge culprits in causing that afternoon slump you're all too familiar with.

I know, it's kind of a bummer when all you want is a brownie. But again, while that brownie might satisfy your sweet tooth (and hey, I'm not going to stop you from having a couple of bites if it's been on your mind *all day*), it's not doing any favors for your energy levels. Instead, Dr. Gioffre tells Elite Daily over email, try to "opt for lunch foods that are going to alkalize and boost energy levels. Salads are great, as they are high in chlorophyll-rich vegetables, which energize [the body]."

And, if you *are* going for a salad, it's best to steer clear of certain dressings, says Gioffre, as many of them can contain a lot of hidden sugar, which will totally defeat the purpose and leave you feeling sleepy AF by the time your lunch break is over. Instead, the nutritionist suggests keeping it simple with something like fresh lemon juice and extra virgin olive oil. I don't know about you, but that combo still sounds *hella* yummy to me.

Gioffre also suggests sticking with plant-based proteins during lunch, like quinoa, which will help you sustain your energy throughout the day.

But if you're a bona fide meat-eater, that doesn't necessarily mean you're *always* going to be a victim of the post-lunch crash. If you prefer that your afternoon bite includes some meat, Dr. Gioffre tells Elite Daily, try to avoid chicken, as he says it has the highest level, compared to most other types of meat, of something called arachidonic acid, which can cause inflammation, and apparently, that inflammation can not only make you super sleepy, but it can also put a bit of a damper on your mood, according to research from the Society for Neuroscience.

If you do feel a slump in the afternoon, though, the last thing you should reach for is a cup of coffee, says Gioffre, since you'll run the risk of having *too* much energy, and then you'll have trouble falling asleep later that night. Instead, the nutritionist tells Elite Daily, it's best to find your energy sources in the foods you're eating. But if you're used to relying on a bev of some kind in the afternoons, Dr. Gioffre suggests [Daily Greens' superfood powder](#), which you can either mix with water or a refreshing smoothie, for a healthy, effective boost in your energy.

Or, of course, you could always move to Spain, where no one will judge you for taking that siesta under your desk. A girl can dream, right?