

An Editor's Invitation: Eating

Category: Eating

written by Paul Gross | December 1, 2021

Dear *Pulse* readers,

My mother used to make me finish everything on my plate.

That may not seem so terrible to many people, but I was pretty scrawny as a child, didn't have a big appetite, and the list of foods I disliked or absolutely detested was long and included:

- asparagus
- cauliflower
- broccoli
- mushrooms
- beets
- spinach
- Brussels sprouts
- liver
- any fish that had a bone in it

Long after my parents and older brother had finished eating and left the table, dinnertime would often find me sitting there alone, forlornly stirring the vegetable du jour.

My early relationship with food was different from someone who grows up with scarcity—my wife, for instance, who wasn't poor, but who had to compete with two hungry brothers for the modest quantities their mom laid out.

If there's a thread that runs through many households, it's parents trying to manage their children's eating. In my practice, I've had parents who want to limit their children's intake, and I've had parents who are convinced that their children will perish unless they stuff food into them.

With all parents, I share the advice that *New York Times* health and nutrition writer Jane Brody offers: The parent's job is to decide what gets served, and the child's job is to decide how much to eat. Pretty simple—and respectful of a child's need to listen to their own body telling them when they're full.

A lot of the food advice I give revolves around diabetes. As I myself have type 1 diabetes, I'm pretty familiar with what foods will send my sugars through the roof. (White rice is the worst.) I used to encourage patients with adult-onset diabetes to lose weight, but now I focus mainly on carbs and sweet drinks. "Eat lots of vegetables," I say. "Eat fruit. Beans. Dairy. Nuts. Seeds. And if you're going to eat rice, try basmati rice. It's delicious, and it's kinder to your blood sugar."

Our relationship with eating and food is complex, and offering advice about same is fraught. One person who did have a big impact on my eating was the author Isaac Bashevis Singer, who became a vegetarian in his seventies. When asked why, he said, "I did not become a vegetarian for my health, I did it for the health of the chickens."

What about you? What's your relationship with eating? Have you ever offered advice to others about their eating? How's that gone?

Send us your lived experience. And while you're at it, take a look at last month's theme: [Gratitude](#).

For more details, visit [More Voices FAQs](#)—or go directly to the [More Voices Submission Form](#).

Remember, your health-related story should be 40-400 words. And no poetry, please.

We look forward to hearing from you.

With warm regards,

Paul Gross

Editor