

# Balance365 Episode 33 Transcript

Annie: Do you ever find yourself at night scaling the kitchen counter to pick through your kids leftover parade candy that's been tucked away in the top cabinet or shoveling handfuls of goldfish in your mouth and just can't seem to stop? Been there, done that, I totally get it.

Late night snacking has a bad rap for contributing to increased waistlines and body weight, but the truth is when you eat matters a lot less than how much you're eating. And if you're a late night snacker there can be many reasons why you can't seem to keep your hand out of the chip bag. If you're looking to cut back on post-dinner snacks this episode is for you. Lauren and I take a look at some of the most common reasons people snack at night and give our best solutions on how to work around them.

But first I want to share with you that our flagship behavior change health and wellness coaching program Balance365 is on sale. Balance365 is your complete step-by-step health, wellness and weight loss program that breaks down healthy habits into simple manageable steps.

Lauren, Jen and I specialize in keeping it simple and showing women in our group the habits that really matter when it comes to long-lasting change so say goodbye to quick fixes and false promises this is about more than just food and exercise and weight loss. This is about living a life your one hundred percent in love with.

You can visit [Balance365.co](https://Balance365.co) now to join and if you're listening to this and missed the opportunity to join, don't worry we have a couple sales each year and the program is always available at its regular price on our website [Balance365.co](https://Balance365.co). OK, let's get to a late night snacking.

Good morning, Lauren. How are you?

Lauren: I am good, how are you?

Annie: Good. Thanks for joining me it's all-

Lauren: You're welcome.

Annie: I didn't give you a choice. It's still kind of early here, it's eight-thirtyish but it's nine-thirty your time right so you've been up for a while.

Lauren: Yeah, I've been up since six.

Annie: I know, you and I are early risers so-

Lauren: Not by choice.

Annie: No, definitely not by choice but I can always count on you to be awake when I'm like thinking of work things at seven am, like "Oh, Lauren's up, I'll just text her."

So we are in the middle of our Power Bowl challenge right now and I'm super excited. It's not too late to join. It's never too late to join. It's fourteen days but you can always join anytime at [PowerBowlChallenge.com](http://PowerBowlChallenge.com) And the reason why I like it is because I think some of the recipes and the composition of the recipes really surprise women as to what we think constitutes a balanced meal and the reason why that's important in terms of today's topic, at least, is what you eat during the day or what you don't eat during the day can kind of affect how you feel at night and that's what we're discussing today is why you can't stop snacking at night, which I have felt like this at various points my life, like why can I not stop eating? Have you?

Lauren: Yes. And I think it's funny that every single Power Bowl challenge the biggest comment that we get is "Oh my gosh this is so much food. Is this really one portion? This is so much food" and I think women are so used to eating those tiny meals throughout the day that we kind of forget what a full meal looks like.

Annie: Absolutely.

Lauren: Or can look like.

Annie: Yes, absolutely and you know the truth is humans enjoy food. I mean, like, I enjoy food, you enjoy food. And that includes eating food at night and for a variety of reasons and what we're going to talk about today, we aren't, like, casting judgment on any of these situations or these circumstances and we're not

saying that they're right or they're wrong, they're more just kind of food for thought, pun intended, ha ha ha ha, mom jokes.

And if you find that snacking at night is problematic for you, here are some reasons why you might be snacking at night and then suggestions on how to work around them and as we discussed on our last podcast, I do, if you haven't listened to our last podcast Three Nutrition Rules You Need To Break, one of the nutrition rules, spoiler alert, was "eating after seven pm" is like a big no no, right? And we debunked that, right, Lauren?

Lauren: Yep.

Annie: Because ultimately it doesn't matter when you consume those calories, it matters more your overall calories intake and expenditure for the day.

Lauren: Correct.

Annie: So eating after seven pm does not just automatically turn to fat but-

Lauren: Right, which we were all led to believe.

Annie: Oh absolutely.

Lauren: Everybody.

Annie: I said it on the last podcast, I swear I was watching an Oprah, I was probably like in eighth grade and she was talking about how she wasn't going to eat after seven pm and I don't know why she wasn't going to eat after seven pm. Most people say "Don't eat after seven pm" as just a way to manipulate their calories, like that's like the kitchen closes and there's nothing. But there's nothing magical about seven pm.

Lauren: But I don't think people really think that. I think a lot of people really think that, you know, something happens after seven pm where the food that you eat is more likely to turn into fat and again, we covered that in our last podcast, but I think if someone were to say it and have that big of an effect, it may have been Oprah. She can have that effect.

Annie: Yes, she can, I mean, Oprah would not lead us astray. But you know what I mean you think of? It made me think of gremlins.

Lauren: Oh yeah.

Annie: You know, when you feed them after midnight or whatever these little gizmos turn into gremlins.

Lauren: But that won't happen to you.

Annie: That's not going to happen to your food or your body. You will not turn into a gremlin if you eat after seven pm or eight pm or nine pm. So let's get going. Reason number one why you cannot stop snacking at night is, drumroll please... you're hungry.

Mind blown.

So it could just be as simple as that you're under eating during the day and that's just, it's that simple, you just don't eat enough during the day.

Lauren: Yeah and that's really really common So in one of our blog posts I have this infographic and it says like binge friendly meal plan, right now? It's like, breakfast: egg whites with spinach, lunch: salad, dry salad with chicken, dinner: like salmon and broccoli, nine pm eat everything in the cupboards, right? Like when you don't eat enough during the day, your body is looking for food, it needs more calories and it's going to search for quick energy sources like sugar and it's meant look for things that taste good like sugar and fat paired together.

Annie: Absolutely.

Lauren: So that's just how your body works.

Annie: And I know, you've really helped me with this in Balance365, when I feel hungry I tend to kind of freak out. I'm better at it now, because you've taught me that hunger is just a signal to your body that it might be time to eat, just like when you're thirsty you don't like drop everything or rushing to drink water. When you're tired you don't stop everything and take a nap, although that would be great.

When you're hungry it's just kind of like "Ooh it's time to eat" but when I allow myself to become like famished I will shovel anything in my mouth, like, I will eat snacks while I'm cooking a meal and I mean, or, you know, microwaving a meal or put in the oven. So I don't cook-

Lauren: Side note, can I tell you that we don't have a microwave right now and I keep buying things that need to be microwaved. Like the microwave rice. Because we just moved and we had to leave our microwave at the old house and the new house they took their microwave so we haven't bought one yet so-

Annie: Yeah. I wouldn't survive. Like I would be eating a Chipotle every day.

Anyways, yes, sidetrack. Yeah, but when it when I do allow myself to get so like beyond hungry, like more than just like "I think it's time to eat", like "I'm famished, I like need to eat right this minute" I tend to overeat.

Lauren: Right, and what do you reach for? Like you don't reach for a carrot.

Annie: Right, no, these usually aren't balanced meals, it's like hand in the chip bag, hand in the cracker box, like all the food right now.

Lauren: and so if that's you know that that's a normal reaction to restricting yourself to the point that your body is literally looking for food anywhere that it can get it, so like that's a normal reaction for you to have when you are eating as little as possible or not eating enough during the day.

Annie: Yeah and sometimes you know sometimes it's not intentional, sometimes as women, you know, with work or children or otherwise, you just.

I don't usually forget to eat. But, I mean, you can run out of time, or you may not have access to food, or it may not be appropriate for you to eat in whatever situation. You know, I've had that happen.

Lauren: It still happens to me on occasion, too, if I don't plan my day well and, you know, things come up, kids get sick, you know.

It just, it happens but that's why it's happening.

Annie: Yes, absolutely. So our suggestion that's super profound and we should charge hundreds of thousands of dollars for is to just eat more earlier in the day. And if you're used to kind of eating later during the day or eating, maybe you skip breakfast, eat a light lunch and then you're eating, eating, eating at night. It might take some trial and error to find out like what's the appropriate amount to eat during the day to feel good and satisfied but not overstuffed at night, so don't feel

like it's like a quick fix, "I do this and then I feel better automatically." It might take a little toying around with.

Lauren: Right. And we go through in the program, in Balance365, how exactly to do that and how to figure that out.

Annie: Absolutely. So, reason number two is you're stressed. And this is me, this is often me.

Lauren: Me too.

Annie: Days can be long and challenging and it's easy and common to want to reward yourself with a really great meal or a treat but sometimes eating can also be a way of numbing or avoiding uncomfortable feelings and ultimately like, dealing with your stress, right?

Additionally, cortisol levels can rise which can lead to cravings for high carbohydrate, salty or fatty foods and they also, when your "feel good" cortisol hormone is low, we often crave food such as carbs to boost that "feel good" chemical in the brain. So this is definitely me and I notice that I do it with carbs, and this is not, like, I'm not saying that carbs are bad, it's just for some reason when I'm stressed I want to eat crackers.

Lauren: I go more for like, donuts, but same. Same thing. Yeah, I'm right there with you. When I'm stressed, like when I get really stressed, I tend to eat and sometimes, like if it's a short term thing, I might just let it go, right, like I might just eat the donuts and move on. But if it's like a chronic, like a chronic situation where every day you're so stressed out that every night you want the donuts or the chips or crackers or whatever that would be something to to explore and try and to get a handle on.

Annie: Absolutely and I think you know I am guilty of this too, is using food as a reward, like I had a really hard day I'm going to, you know, go have a big meal and just lay in bed and you know, we've been talking a lot more about this in our community, that once in a while that's great, that's absolutely what I need. But if I continue to do that night after night after night, like you were saying, if this becomes habitual behavior, that I am overeating high calorie foods on a nightly basis and over consuming calories that I don't ultimately need for my body's

energy needs, that doesn't align with my long term goals and ultimately, that's not going to leave me feeling good and healthy and rested.

It could mess with your sleep as well so just be aware of, you know, why you're eating, what you're eating, why you're reaching for what you're reaching and, you know, like we said at the beginning of the podcast, you can do this without judgment, which is really really difficult.

Especially if you're kind of new to our approach but, you know, like, "What's going on here? Why do I think I need this? Am I hungry? Am I stressed? What does my body really need right now? Is that sleep? Is that self care? Is it just chill out for a minute and then come back to the kitchen?"

Lauren: Right and also, you can acknowledge that food can be very comforting in the short term, so you know, in the program I go through this too, we have an emotional eating section and most of us when we were very young were kind of taught not deliberately but we were taught that when something happens like you fall down you skin your knee or whatever, an adult will come over and may give you a hug or they might give you like a lollipop or something and then you get those feel good feelings and that happens enough times that that clicks in your brain like "Feeling bad? Get food. Feel better." Right? And that really does work short term and then, unfortunately, long term that doesn't lead to feeling good.

Annie: Right, I mean, but it's important to note that you can have a hormonal response when you're stressed, when you're hungry, we'll get to this in a little bit, when you're tired, that can affect what kind of foods you're reaching for so, you know, just keep that in mind.

I think that kind of is the check in the column for another reason why you shouldn't beat yourself when you find yourself snacking at night and it's a habit you want to let go of or or decrease. Or remove completely. Just know that your body is doing things to help you survive and it's nothing to be ashamed of or to beat yourself up.

But a way to fix this is obviously to explore ways to reduce stress that aren't food related. So, like I said earlier, could you take a bath, could you take a walk, could you take a shower, if that's in fact why you're eating. Again, if you're hungry, eat.

But if you think you're eating at night or you're snacking at night because you're stressed, how else can you cope with your stress? Maybe journaling, meditation, phone a friend, make a to do list. Sometimes I feel like I just need like a brain dump to get all the things in my head out on paper and then I don't have to be responsible for them anymore.

Lauren: Then throw that piece of paper away.

Annie: And then burn it and pretend I don't have to do it. Or reward yourself for battling through a tough day - without food. Again, could you take a hot shower? Could you listen to some music? Could you give yourself a little pedicure at home or, you know, do a face mask or have a hot cup of tea? Whatever sounds good to you are all ways that you can hopefully work around stress address your stress or reward yourself for getting through the day that aren't food related. Again, if food is problematic for you.

Reason Number three is: you're tired.

Lauren: Dun, dun, dun.

Annie: Which is also me. Like just check, check, check but really, when you're tired your body releases more of the hormones that make you feel hungry and it also slows the creation of the hormones that do make you feel satisfied so, leptin, the fullness hormone is decreased and ghrelin, the hunger, am I saying that right Lauren?

Lauren: Ghrelin.

Annie: Ghrelin, thank you, the hunger hormone is increased so when you're tired it's totally normal to feel hungrier. And it's also totally normal to feel like you just don't get full or you don't get as full by foods that you maybe normally consume.

Lauren: Right? And again, it changes the type of foods that you might crave too. Like when I'm hungry again it's carbs, carbs, carbs.

Annie: Yes. Yes. And that's not just in your head because studies have shown that the amount of sleep women have and how well they sleep is linked to the foods that they eat and their risk of weight gain or poor mental health even and that they're more likely to reach for higher carb, fattier snacks for quick fuel and I

think the quality of sleep here is really important, because I said on a podcast or two ago that I am in bed a really long time.

Like, I'm in bed by nine, nine thirty and I wake up at six but my kids do not sleep through the night, like all three of them are up almost every single night at various points in the night, so I'm in bed a long time but the quality of sleep that I'm actually getting isn't very good, and obviously that's a bit out of my control. And if you're in the same boat, you know, solidarity. My heart goes out to you.

But just know that sometimes if you find yourself at night and you're like, "I'm just eating food" could it be that you're tired and you just need to go to bed or, you know, go read a book instead of stand in the kitchen or stand in front of the fridge because that's also me, like I will, again, reach for carbs at night when I'm tired versus just go to bed.

Lauren: Right, because sometimes it's like it's hard to just go to bed when you've had a long day with kids you're touched out, you just want some time to yourself to relax and unwind and if you're exhausted and your kids go to bed at eight, you're like eight thirty, I'm exhausted, like sometimes instead of going to bed we stay up just to have that alone time so like we get that. It's not always that easy but if eating at night is a problem for you and you're tired, then I would think about maybe, maybe you don't go to bed at you know nine, but maybe can you cut back a half hour and go to bed about a half hour earlier, an hour earlier?

Annie: Right, or if you still want to snack and you want to stay up, could you just swap in something a little bit healthier choice. So we have this mantra in Balance365 which is good, better, best. So at any given point in the day you can make kind of your choices that you can make or we look at them kind of on a spectrum or continuum and sometimes you can make the best choice which some days that might be going to bed. Some days it might be the good or better choice which might be instead of, you know, having a whole box of Cheez-It like me, could you have a peach? Which, by the way, peaches in season right now are amazing and I'm not a fruit eater like just side note: Peaches.

Lauren: What.

Annie: I have been I have been snacking on peaches and I'm like not a fruit person. I really don't enjoy fruit all that much but especially at night when I've been like "I kind of want to eat but I've met my caloric needs for the day." I'm not

eating because I'm hungry, I'm not eating because I'm stressed, I'm usually eating for like entertainment or just something to do or because it's there. I've been grabbing peaches and it's they're really good, like they're in season right now, those Colorado peaches are amazing. And I don't want to be one of those people that talks about like how good fruit is and how does it taste like candy, because I used to roll my eyes at people that did that.

Lauren. No, it's not candy, sorry.

Annie: It's a peach. But they're really good, you guys. Anyways, so yeah. Again, good, better, best, so maybe some nights that "best" choice is you go to bed, other nights it might be that you have a better choice for a snack versus what you would normally go for. It's a way to kind of level up your habit if you're eating at night because you're tired, because we know that sleep isn't, it's not just as easy as like "Oh, I'm tired, I'm going to sleep and then I'm going to stay asleep when I'm in bed." Like most of us are moms, it didn't work that way. The fourth reason is that you're cutting yourself short on carbs and carbs just have a bad rap.

Lauren: Right, you know, even through this podcast, I wanted to mention, like we've been talking about "Oh I'm doing this I eat carbs, eat carbs, eat carbs" and we're not saying that eating carbs are bad by any means, like you need carbs, and you need a decent amount of carbs, it only becomes a problem when it gets really out of balance with your other macronutrients. So that's kind of where we're at here, when you cut yourself short on carbs you're obviously, you're going to crave them even more later.

Annie: Absolutely and we see this a lot in, you know, kind of the traditional dieters that are cutting carbs or if you're super athletic, if you're super active under carbining yourself can lead to cravings for more carbs.

Lauren: I like that little word you just made up, undercarbining, I think I'm going to adopt that.

Annie: Was that not a word? It sounds like a word.

Lauren: I don't think that's a word. Undercarbin.

Annie: I just made it a word.

Lauren: it's good though, I like it.

Annie: You knew exactly what I meant.

Lauren: Yep. And also, I'll mention too that when we're talking about macronutrients, your protein needs and your fat needs stay relatively constant and I just want to mention this, because Annie talked about activity level, but when your activity level rises, what you need more of is carbs, so if you are like training for a half marathon or doing Couch to Five K or whatever and your activity level skyrockets, you are going to be hungrier and if your protein and fat are in the balanced range that we recommend in the program, then what you do need increase is your carbs, possibly.

Annie: Yes and I will note that as hunger relates to activity, I notice this myself and research also agrees that steady state like running or aerobic activity can also increase hunger and I noticed that when I do more circuit training where my heart rate is at that kind of moderate stage for a longer period of time that I just wind up hungrier and that's a normal response to increased activity and caloric expenditure so it's nothing to like try to ignore or feel bad about or be like "why am I so hungry?"

Lauren: And, side note, this is why we don't just recommend people rely on exercise for fat loss because it makes you hungry.

Annie: Absolutely, that's a great point and this is also why I love the Power Bowl Challenge because the solution or the fix, our suggestion to fix this, if you're cutting yourself short on carbs is to eat more balanced meals throughout the day and that's again why I love the Power Bowl Challenge because each Power Bowl is comprised of protein, carbs, fats, veggies. And people are like "This is a lot of food. I get to eat all of this in one meal?" and I'm like, "Yes!"

Lauren: Yes, you do.

Annie: Happy Birthday! Obviously, if you're full before you finish it, you know, no, you don't have to eat it all, right? Like I think we're so used to, as we talked about on the last podcast, so used to eating many meals or meals that are missing entire food groups.

Lauren: Like carbs, which is usually the food group that's missing.

Annie: Yeah, absolutely. And sometimes my meals are missing various food groups, like they're not all balanced, all the time.

Lauren: They're not all going to be perfect and like, we realize that and that's not where we're trying to get you.

Annie: Yeah and again, this is no judgment. This is just like, if you find yourself like "Oh, OK, it's six pm and I have had you know maybe a serving of carbohydrates for the whole day and here I am, hungry," like this could be why. You know, it's just kind of like we say, like kind of running experiments on yourself and then you try it out and then you try a solution and if it works, great, if it doesn't, you tweak and then evolve and then tweak again and then try again and it's just kind of a trial and error sometimes.

Lauren: Yeah and that's what I'm constantly telling our members too is you're not going to get it right probably on the first try, like this is all about finding what works for you and we give guidelines for that, but like, I'm not you and I don't know exactly what's going to work for you. I can give you the guidelines and tell you the general things that work for most people but inside of that you have to find for yourself the exact thing that will work.

Annie: Absolutely. And the other element to why you might be snacking and I didn't put this on the outline but I want to talk about it, is your environment.

Lauren: Yeah.

Annie: Do I make you nervous when I'm like "I didn't put this on the outline"?

Lauren: This was not planned.

Annie: What's going to come out of her mouth? It could just be a matter of your environment and yeah, I know that's true for me, actually last night I finished dinner and I told John that I wanted a cookie and he went to the grocery store and he brought home a dozen cookies and I just wanted a cookie and so now I had a cookie, he had a cookie and now we have ten cookies sitting in the cabinet and I can tell you that I probably wouldn't have thought about eating a cookie already today if those cookies weren't in my house.

Lauren: Right.

Annie: And it's not the cookies are bad, it's just like, "Are you eating it just because it's there?" it's like, you know, if out of sight out of mind. Is that, you know, like could could that help you? And I think it was you, Lauren, that talked

about ice cream. Like you have ice cream in the house, you like ice cream but you put ice cream in your deep freeze. Was that you?

Lauren: No, that was Jen. I don't typically buy ice cream. But I used to buy ice cream all the time and I used to eat ice cream every night because I bought ice cream all the time, so now I don't really buy it, and sometimes we'll go out like as a family and we'll all go get ice cream or if I do want ice cream, I don't have any, I just buy the small pint or I just run to Dairy Queen and get a small one. Like you don't have to always keep all the treats in your house and it's not that they're bad, it's just, as Annie said, your environment. If it's there, you're likely to think about it more.

Annie: Right and I am all in favor of curating your environment to support your goals. So if you find yourself like eating chocolate just because you have a bag of M&M's. I'm talking about a "friend". We buy M & Ms for like movie night but then what happens is I end up eating the rest of the M & Ms. But if you find yourself struggling to kind of keep your hand out of the cookie jar, so to speak, then just move the cookie jar.

Lauren: Can you put it up in a high cabinet or a low cabinet or in the basement?

Annie: Right, you can still have those foods but make it a little bit more difficult for you to get there. So if you find yourself like, "I want a cookie," it's like this genuine craving for a cookie, OK. Like, let's think "Do we really want a cookie or not?" versus "Oh, look, there's cookies. Now, I want a cookie."

Lauren: Right, yeah, if it's on the counter, like, I'm going to grab it as I go by, right, but if it's like up in the cupboard, half the time I forget it's there, and the other half of the time at least I'm like "I want a cookie, do I want it enough to get the stepladder and get it, like yes or no?" Sometimes I do and sometimes it's like "Meh, no."

Annie: Right and, you know, if you're banking on willpower and motivation and discipline to say no to cookies after you walk by them, you know, twenty times a day, I wouldn't be surprised if eventually you're like "OK, just give me a cookie."

Lauren: Yeah, that's a losing battle.

Annie: Right, so set yourself up for success and that's going to look different for everyone. You know, I've talked about this before with alcohol as how my

environment has affected my caloric drink intake, which is another situation we address in Balance365 is decreasing caloric drinks, but when we buy boxed wine I just consume more alcohol. It's just so easy to pour a glass out of a box wine versus open a bottle, you know, like you know if we're sharing a bottle with friends or my husband it's like, "OK, when the bottle's done, it's done" versus box wine, it, like, just keeps flowing. So our solution-

Lauren: Neverending.

Annie: Yeah, so our solution was we just stopped buying box wine. If we want wine we will go get a bottle and we'll have a drink at dinner when we're out to eat but we're not going to keep boxed wine in the house because we know it affects our consumption, right and that doesn't align with our goals right now.

So, again, no judgment, that's just what works for us. Anything you want to add, Lauren, about why you're snacking at night before we do a quick review?

Lauren: No, I think we covered it. I guess one more I would add to is like it's just become a habit.

Annie: Sure.

Lauren: Right, like you just do it every day because you've been doing it every night for months so breaking that habit, we have a whole podcast on that, too, which I would recommend listening to if you think that's you. So like, find something else to put in that place, and we go through that in that podcast but that would be the only other thing I'd like to add, I think.

Annie: So, just a quick review before we wrap up here is reasons you're snacking at night. Number one, you're hungry. Just simply eat more, try to eat more during the day. Number two: you're stressed, the days are long and hard and challenging sometimes and stress can make you want to eat more or you can also feel the need to reward yourself for getting through a stressful day, so we encourage you to explore ways to reduce stress that aren't food related or reward yourself that aren't food related.

Number three, you're tired. Again, when you're tired your body does release hormones that make you feel hungry and decrease the likelihood that you feel full and lack of sleep also increases the likelihood that you're going to reach for higher caloric foods.

So a suggestion, obviously, is to sleep more if you can, if you find yourself tired, take a nap, go to bed earlier. And then cutting yourself short on carbs was reason number four. This is true for dieters that might be trying to cut out carbs all together or athletes or really active individuals that their energy expenditure is super high and then reasons five and six that we weren't on the outline that we added (because this is what we do, we go rogue sometimes.)

It could just be a product of your environment or a habit and the great thing about all of these is they're really easy, or simple, I should say, to address. So if you're struggling with night time snacking and it's not something you want to continue, there hopefully are some workarounds for you that you're not just stuck with nighttime snacking, or you might be listening to me like, "I dig my night time snacking" and that's cool too.

Lauren: Right.

Annie: Awesome. Alright, Lauren, anything else to add before we wrap up? Lauren: No, I'm good.

Annie: Thanks so much for joining us, we'll talk soon, ok?

Lauren: Alright, bye.

Annie: Bye.