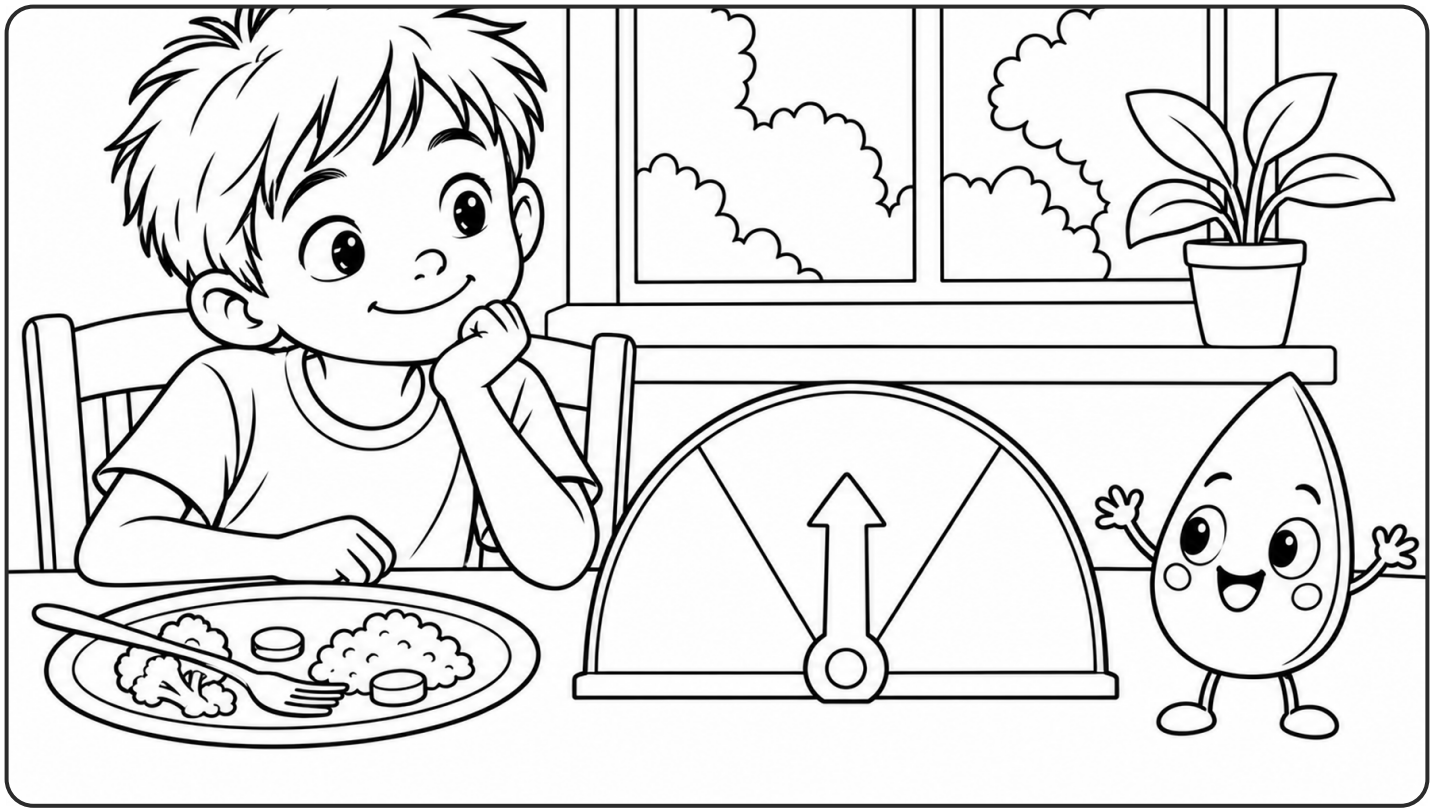
Why does my tummy feel so full after a big dinner?

In the fall, on Thanksgiving, lots of families sit down to a really big dinner. Afterwards, your tummy feels round and tight, like a balloon! Why does my tummy feel so full after a big dinner?



Why?

1. **Your stomach is a stretchy bag.**
   When it is empty, it is only about as big as your fist, and all wrinkly inside. When food comes in, the folds smooth out, and the stomach stretches bigger and bigger, like a balloon filling up.
2. **Stretch sensors say: I'm getting full!**
   The wall of your stomach has tiny stretch sensors. When it stretches, they send a message along your nerves, up to your brain. Your gut sends little messengers through your blood too.
3. **But the message is slow.**
   It can take about twenty minutes before your brain really feels full. At a big feast, you can eat plate after plate before the message arrives! So your stomach stretches extra big, and feels tight and heavy.

Try it! Make a full-o-meter

You need: paper and a pencil

1. Make a full-o-meter: hungry, just right, and too full.
2. At dinner, eat half your plate, then stop and wait a few minutes.
3. Where is your full-o-meter now?

What happened? The full message takes a while to reach your brain.

Video + more questions:
whywhywhykids.com/fullbelly

scan with a grown-up