Essentials of Health

A new review of 22 studies shows that eating slower may reduce food intake and is an effective method of limiting caloric excess leading to obesity.

Slower eating reduces food intake

Obesity is typically considered an epidemic in most developed nations, and there are literally hundreds, if not thousands of methods utilized by "dieters" to try and reduce food intake. Eating rate has been suggested by some research as a way to manipulate food intake, but study results have been mixed and the relation between eating rate and calorie intake has not been systematically reviewed.

In a new study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, researchers analyzed experimentally manipulated differences in eating rate and its influence on energy intake, hunger, or both.

Researchers analyzed and combined the evidence from 22 studies to calculate the average differences in food intake between slow and fast eating, and the possible differences in hunger.

The combined evidence from the research indicated that a slower eating rate was associated with lower energy (calorie) consumption, when compared to a faster eating rate. This observation was true regardless of the type of manipulation used to alter the eating rate. Hunger at the end of a meal was not significantly related to the rate of eating, however.

This review of the available evidence supports the idea that the rate of eating does affect energy intake. Regardless of the method used to slow down eating rate, eating slower will most likely result in lower food intake and help limit excess consumption related to obesity.

Eric Robinson et al. A systematic review and meta-analysis examining the effect of eating rate on energy intake and hunger. July 2014. Am J Clin Nutr 100(1):123-151.