

'Dessert with breakfast diet' helps avoid weight regain by reducing cravings

June 25 2012

Dieters have less hunger and cravings throughout the day and are better able to keep off lost weight if they eat a carbohydrate-rich, protein-packed breakfast that includes dessert. These findings come from a new study that will be presented at The Endocrine Society's 94th Annual Meeting in Houston.

"The goal of a weight loss diet should be not only [weight reduction](#) but also reduction of hunger and cravings, thus helping prevent weight regain," said Daniela Jakubowicz, MD, the study's principal investigator.

Jakubowicz, a senior physician at Tel Aviv University's Wolfson Medical Center in Holon, Israel, and her co-authors studied nearly 200 nondiabetic obese adults who were randomly assigned to eat one of two low-calorie diets. Both diets had the same number of daily calories—about 1,600 for men and 1,400 for women—but differed mainly in the composition of breakfast.

One group received a low-carbohydrate diet, featuring a 304-calorie breakfast with only 10 grams of carbohydrates, or "carbs." The other group ate a 600-calorie breakfast with 60 grams of carbs, which included a small sweet, such as chocolate, a doughnut, a cookie or cake. Both diets contained protein (such as tuna, egg whites, cheese and low-fat milk) at breakfast, but the "dessert with breakfast diet" had 45 grams of protein, 15 grams more than in the low-carb diet.

Halfway through the eight-month study, participants in both groups lost

an average of 33 pounds (15.1 kilograms, or kg) per person, which Jakubowicz said shows that "both diets work the same." However, in the last four months of the study, the low-carb group regained an average of 22 pounds (11.6 kg) per person, while participants who ate the dessert with breakfast diet lost another 15 pounds (6.9 kg) each, the authors reported.

In addition, the study subjects who ate the dessert with breakfast diet reported feeling less hunger and fewer cravings compared with the other group. Subjects' food diaries showed that the dessert with breakfast group had better compliance in sticking to their calorie requirements. Women who ate the dessert with breakfast diet were allowed 500 calories for lunch and about 300 calories for dinner. Men in that group could eat a 600-calorie lunch and up to 464 [calories](#) at dinner.

As further evidence supporting the dessert with breakfast diet, the levels of ghrelin, the so-called "hunger hormone," dropped much more after breakfast than in the low-carb group: 45.2 percent versus 29.5 percent, respectively, according to the abstract.

Jakubowicz attributed the better results from the dessert with breakfast diet to meal timing and composition. She said the diet's high protein content reduced [hunger](#); the combination of protein and carbs increased satiety, or feeling full; and the dessert decreased cravings for sweet, starchy and fatty foods. Such [cravings](#) often occur when a diet restricts sweets and can result in eating many fattening foods that are not allowed on the diet, she said.

This study was published in the March issue of the journal *Steroids*.

Provided by The Endocrine Society

Citation: 'Dessert with breakfast diet' helps avoid weight regain by reducing cravings (2012, June 25) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-06-dessert-breakfast-diet-weight-regain.html>

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