Fast food restaurant lighting and music can reduce calorie intake and increase satisfaction

August 29 2012

Your mood for food can be changed by a restaurant's choice of music and lighting, leading to increased satisfaction and reduced calorie intake, according to a new study.

"When we did a makeover of a fast-food restaurant, we found that softer music and lighting led diners to eat 175 fewer calories and enjoy it more," said the study's lead author, Brian Wansink, professor of marketing and director of Cornell University's Food and Brand Lab.

Wansink and his co-author, Koert van Ittersum of the Georgia Institute of Technology, found that softening the lighting and music in fast-food restaurants didn't change what people ordered, but it caused them to eat 18 percent less of what they ordered—775 calories instead of 949. They also rated the food as more enjoyable. The results are posted online in the journal *Psychological Reports*. The Wansink-Ittersum study counters the popular notion that people who dine in a relaxed environment, with soft lighting and mellow music, will order more food and eat more than those in a more typical dining environment.

"These results suggest that a more relaxed environment increases satisfaction and decreases consumption," Wansink said. "This is important information for fast-food restaurants, which are often accused of contributing to obesity: Making simple changes away from brighter lights and sound-reflecting surfaces can go a long way toward reducing

[overeating](link)—and increase their customers' satisfaction at the same time."

Provided by Cornell Food & Brand Lab

Citation: Fast food restaurant lighting and music can reduce calorie intake and increase satisfaction (2012, August 29) retrieved 2 May 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-08-fast-food-restaurant-music-calorie.html