

Food memories can help weight loss

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(Medical Xpress)—Research led by a psychologist at the University of Liverpool has found that using memories of recent meals reduces the amount of food eaten later on. It also found that being distracted when eating leads to increased consumption.

Researchers analysed 24 separate studies which had examined the impact of awareness, attention, memory and distraction on how much food we eat.

Lower food consumption

They found that remembering meals, being more aware and paying added attention to meals results in lower [food consumption](#) and could help with weight loss programmes.

Techniques such as writing down previous meals, using visual reminders of previous meals and keeping [food wrappers](#) were found to help with food memories and lead to a reduction in meal sizes.

Dr Eric Robinson, from the Institute of Psychology, Health and Society, said: "Our research found that if people recalled their last meal as being filling and satisfying then they ate less during their next meal.

This could be developed as a new strategy to help with weight loss and maintenance and reduce the need for calorie controlled dieting.

"However, whilst techniques which remind you of what you have eaten reduce food consumption, some practical strategies to put these findings

into practice need to be further developed.

"Also, the studies we analysed looked at adults with healthy [body mass index](#) so additional work is needed to find out how this might affect people who are overweight."

Distractions lead to increased consumption

The research also identified that being distracted when eating a meal leads to increased consumption of the immediate meal but has even more of an effect on later eating.

Distractions, which include [watching television](#), listening to the radio or music or reading a newspaper at the [dinner table](#), impede a person's awareness of the food they are eating and results in over-consumption.

The research is published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

Provided by University of Liverpool

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