

Eating 'on the go' could lead to weight gain, new research finds

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In a new study published today in the *Journal of Health Psychology*, researchers from the University of Surrey have found dieters who eat 'on the go' may increase their food intake later in the day which could lead to weight gain and obesity. The findings from the study also showed that eating while walking around triggered more overeating compared to eating during other forms of distraction such as watching TV or having a

conversation with a friend.

The team examined 60 females who were either [dieters](#) or non-dieters and gave them all a cereal bar to [eat](#) under three different conditions. The first group was asked to watch a five-minute clip of the sitcom 'Friends' while eating. The second group was asked to walk around the corridor while consuming the cereal bar, and the third group was simply asked to sit opposite a friend and have a conversation. After the experiment, participants completed a follow-up questionnaire and a taste test involving four different bowls of snacks, including chocolate, carrot sticks, grapes and crisps. How much they ate was measured after they left the room.

The results showed that dieters ate more snacks at the taste test if they had eaten the initial cereal bar whilst walking around and specifically they ate five times more chocolate.

"Eating on the go may make dieters overeat later on in the day," said lead author Professor Jane Ogden from the University of Surrey.

"This may be because walking is a powerful form of distraction which disrupts our ability to process the impact eating has on our hunger. Or it may be because walking, even just around a corridor, can be regarded as a form of exercise which justifies overeating later on as a form of reward."

"Even though walking had the most impact, any form of distraction, including eating at our desks can lead to weight gain. When we don't fully concentrate on our meals and the process of taking in food, we fall into a trap of [mindless eating](#) where we don't track or recognise the food that has just been consumed."

More information: Take the 'Al desco vs Al fresco' quiz to discover

what effects your everyday eating habits have on your health and wellbeing: [www.surrey.ac.uk/mediacentre/f ... lunch-making-you-fat](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/mediacentre/f...lunch-making-you-fat)

Provided by University of Surrey

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