

Slim down by counting bites instead of calories

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(HealthDay)—Weight loss wisdom suggests chewing every bite 15 or

more times to give your brain time to process what you're eating and send the signal that you're full. Now a group of studies has found that counting the bites themselves could be an effective way to lose weight.

Knowing that dieters often underreport how many calories they eat, researchers from Clemson University conducted a number of studies that showed bites could be a more accurate measure of food intake. They also found that [wearable technology](#) that can count the bites for you and tell you when you've reached your limit can help you eat less.

To create a realistic bite goal for yourself, start by establishing your baseline number of bites. Without changing anything about your current consumption, track and write down every bite you take at every meal and snack for one week. Then you can work on reducing that number.

A [pilot study](#) at Brigham Young University found that when participants cut their bites by 20 percent or 30 percent at every meal and snack, they lost an average of about one pound a week and lowered their body mass index (BMI), too. (BMI is a measure of body fat that takes into account a person's [weight](#) and height.)

One reason counting bites helps is that it keeps you from [mindless eating](#). It's also less time-consuming than counting calories, which may make sticking with it easier. Just make sure you don't try to compensate by taking bigger bites when you eat, a natural tendency, but one that will bite you back by slowing [weight loss](#).

More information: Harvard Health has a more detailed explanation of how [more bites and slower eating](#) helps curb appetite and, in turn, calories.

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