

# Eating habits during COVID-19 pandemic

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What effect have self-isolation and quarantine had on body weight and diet during the COVID-19 pandemic? Research published in the *International Journal of Environment and Health* looks at this troubling issue.

The emergence of a novel coronavirus towards the end of 2019 and the subsequent global pandemic have left few people unaffected by the disease. One significant aspect now being seen as a serious problem is the issue of diet and [weight gain](#) among those living under rules aimed at reducing the spread of the disease through lockdown and self-isolation. Behnaz Shahrokhisahneh of the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics at Cihan University-Erbil in Iraq has investigated this issue through a review of some 21 research papers encompassing the diets and body metrics of almost 30000 people.

She found that overall, very few people showed signs of eating disorders during the pandemic. However, many of them did gain weight and many of them displayed behavior one might refer to as "[emotional eating](#)," presumably induced by the stresses and strains of lockdowns and [self-isolation](#). Overall, around half of the populations considered in the research works showed signs of unhealthy eating during the pandemic. Conversely, that does imply that half of those people practiced healthy eating habits despite the worldwide concerns surrounding COVID-19.

Shahrokhisahneh suggests that more research is urgently needed to investigate the issues surrounding diet and eating during a pandemic of this scale. Given that [obesity](#) is a significant risk factor for morbidity in COVID-19, it is rather pressing that this should be done. Moreover, there is a need to look at the issue in a more granular manner at the individual country level to see what impact different lockdown rules and regulations had on the [diet](#) and eating habits of each nation's citizens. There is a need to provide insights for policymakers as we continue to live with COVID-19 and indeed for any future pandemic where

widespread lockdowns and isolation will be required again.

**More information:** Behnaz Shahrokhisahneh, Dietary and eating behaviours during COVID-19 pandemic: with an emphasis on the impact of self-isolation and quarantine on body weight, *International Journal of Environment and Health* (2022). [DOI: 10.1504/IJENVH.2021.122315](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJENVH.2021.122315)

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