

# Are you the feeder in your relationship?

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The new study focuses on the eating habits of 76 couples and found that individuals who diet or use food to manage their emotions—such as eating because they are cross—were more motivated to display "feeder behavior" within relationships.

Professor Jane Ogden, co-author of the study from the University of Surrey, said, "People often feed others even when they are not hungry for reasons such as [love](#), waste avoidance or as a sign of status—but this new study aims to understand how this behavior functions within a relationship.

"What is fascinating is that we found that people who use food as a tool to aid their own emotional well-being were also encouraging their partners to overeat. Of course, this is worrying as these behaviors can lead people to become obese, and other long-term health issues."

The data comes from a new Feeder Questionnaire developed by the team from Surrey, with the results correlating with existing literature on eating behavior.

The study also suggests that contrary to popular beliefs, relationships often have two feeders, especially if both people agree on certain issues, such as feeding to avoid waste, to show someone their affection or simply offloading the food on their own plate.

Professor Ogden says, "This research confirms that [social pressures](#) within a relationship play a key role in our [food intake](#). The next step for our research is to find out whether these feeder processes are the same within other [social groups](#), such as friendships, families and same-sex relationships."

The research has been published in the journal *Appetite*.

**More information:** Jane Ogden et al, Assessing feeder motivations and behaviour within couples using the Feeder Questionnaire, *Appetite* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.appet.2022.106285](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2022.106285)

Provided by University of Surrey

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