

WHY YOU SHOULD EAT SLOWLY

Back in the 1800s, health-food enthusiast Horace Fletcher advised people to chew each mouthful thoroughly in order to prevent weight gain. It turns out this isn't just an old wives' tale!

Evidence is mounting that fast-paced eating is detrimental to your health.

benefits of a moderate pace

You tend to eat more food when you eat quickly yet feel less full and satisfied when you're through. A study published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* showed people consume 10 per cent fewer kilojoules when they eat slowly than when they gobble down a meal.

Self-reported rapid eaters have a higher body mass index (BMI) and gain more weight over time—whether they are healthy or diabetic, adults or children. One study of more than 3000 Japanese men and women showed those who ate quickly until they felt full had three times the risk of being overweight than those who ate more slowly! Speed eating is also linked with a higher risk of getting type 2 diabetes.

how it works

After eating a meal at a moderate pace, your body releases more “satiety” hormones, which send a signal to your brain that you should stop eating. For example, when healthy males were

given a tub of ice-cream, they were more satisfied after licking it over a period of 30 minutes as opposed to devouring it in 5 minutes. If you bolt down your food in a hurry, there is inadequate time for your brain to get the message that you've eaten enough and it's time to stop. Most fast eaters will therefore “overshoot” and consume additional kilojoules they would otherwise have been satisfied without.

tips for eating slower

Your eating speed is a learned activity. Research with obese adolescents showed they could retrain their habits in ways that would positively influence their “satiety” hormones. Here are a few tips to help you eat slower:

- ▶ Put down your fork between mouthfuls and savour the food—and the moment.
- ▶ Chew well and swallow before you insert more food into your mouth.
- ▶ Pretend you are eating at a fine restaurant. Most people eat slower under such conditions, savouring each “expensive” bite.
- ▶ Apps such as *Eat Slower* and *Next Bite* can help you pace yourself.



Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and co-author of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See www.sueradd.com for more nutrition information.