

## Self-Restraining with Overeating Habits **Tooba Zaidi**

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### Introduction

Overeating, sometimes considered as eating disorder, is excessive intake of food by a person when compared with the energy needed. It is not a disease but extra consumption of food than required consequently leads to extra caloric intake which may gain weight and increase the risk for chronic diseases related to being overweight like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart diseases and stroke [1].

### Discussion

There are many factors which can contribute to overeating. Commonly observed is low intake of water, skipping of meals, use of processed food, increased stress level and sedentary life style. Moreover, it is also seen that people often confuse thirst with hunger and they eat instead of drinking. Also, some people drink juices and soft drinks instead of water which only increases the calories even without satisfying the feeling of thirst. Researches prove the benefits of drinking water to reduce appetite and to control weight. A recent study provides even more evidence that we should choose water over other drinks, it was found that the participants who drank most of the plain water in their daily diet consumed fewer total calories, which could add up to a lot fewer calories over time and result in significant weight loss [2].

Skipping meals for any of the reasons like controlling or reducing weight or due to busy life schedule is not a good idea because by doing this one only increases his hunger badly and as a result he ends up by eating large portion of food containing excess calories leading to fat deposition, on the other hand due to the unviability of carbohydrates your body might turn to your muscles as a fuel source, further reducing your metabolism and weakening your strength. [3]. Practices like; fix the timing of meals [take first meal early in the morning consisting of most of the calories], take small frequent meals [divide your diet in 5-6 meals per day consisting of 3big meals and 2-3 small between meals, drink a glass of water before each meal, take time to eat your meal, chew your food well, control your portion size, fill half of your plate with vegetables, take your last big meal early [at least 3 hours before lying down or sleep] [4].

The trend of using processed food is increasing day by day. The reason behind this is because of the fast-changing life styles, influence of media, increasing urbanization, changing preferences of the population, easy to prepare, increased shelf

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life, but it is not a healthy option as during processing food may lose many nutrients including proteins, carbohydrates, minerals and vitamins. One of the biggest loss during processing is of dietary fibre [5]. Adequate intake of dietary fiber aids the food to digest slowly and satisfy the feeling of hunger for long time in this way it helps into foster weight management, to lower blood cholesterol, to prevent colon cancer and diabetes[6]. On the other hand, if sufficient dietary fiber is not present the food will digest and absorb readily as a result you will be hungry again and eat more in a short time.

Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain or tension in which complex mix of hormones and chemicals such as adrenaline, cortisol and norepinephrine are released [7]. Continuous stress increases the release of cortisol, and cortisol increases appetite. Stress also seems to affect food preferences like increases the intake of food high in fat, sugar, or both. These foods are also known as 'comfort foods' because they help to ease the condition by inhibiting the activity in the parts of the brain that produce and process stress and related emotions, this may contribute to peoples stress induced craving for those foods [8].

Studies illustrate the strong interactions between diet and physical activity in relationship to the over consumption of energy [9]. Sedentary life style may not directly associate with overeating, but it increases the factors which enhance overeating including decreased sleep, stress, anxiety and depression. Physical activity is truly important to reduce these factors, for

many people this will require increased motivation and a major shift in schedules. Exercise makes you physically and mentally fit, and helps you look better. You don't need to join a gym, activities like walking, gardening, cleaning house, swimming, cycling will help [10].

## Conclusion

In conclusion to overcome the problem of overeating you need to:

1. Increase your water intake; drink at least 2-3 litres (about 8-12 cups) of water per day [6].
2. Try to take six meals in a day, consisting of healthy food with correct portion size.

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