

Studies Find Calories, Not Protein, Are Key to Weight Control

Difficulty:

AVERAGE

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Discussion activities to be done after completing this EA lesson

Today's report is about new studies into weight gain. What is the problem with people's weight? What did the studies focus on and who participated? What did the studies find out? How can they help people with weight problems?

Extension discussion topics

A. Talking about and going over the specific topic / idea / issue in listening text

Introduction = What did you learn about the reasons for the studies, and who carried them out? What happened in the research? What did the studies find and how can the results help people with weight problems?

1. Why are these studies important?

- Sixty percent of U.S. adults are overweight, and more than thirty percent are obese.
- The World Health Organization says obesity has reached epidemic proportions globally.
- More than one billion adults worldwide are overweight.
- Obesity brings with it other very serious health problems.
- People who wish to lose weight get conflicting advice about diets.
- For example, some diets say cut out carbohydrates.
- Yet, other diets say cut out the fat, eat more protein, and even eat less protein.

Do you think people's weight is an important and growing problem?

2. What happened in the studies and who took part?

- One study was done by Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian from the Harvard School of Public Health.
- Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian studies the relationship between diet and chronic diseases.
- Dr. George Bray, from the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Louisiana, carried out a study to find out if protein affects weight gain.
- In Dr. Bray's study twenty-five healthy adults participated.
- They were all overfed by almost a thousand calories a day, but they followed low, normal or high protein diets.
- They could eat what they wanted, and ate things they didn't normally eat.
- The study measured their weight gains.
- This study was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Would you have agreed to participate in the study?

3. What did the studies find and how can the results help people with weight problems?
- All of the participants gained weight.
 - There was no connection between eating a low, normal or high protein diet and weight gains.
 - It was the calories that they ate that affected the body fat that they stored.
 - Those who ate a higher percentage of protein gained more lean body mass while those on a low protein diet experienced just the opposite.
 - So if protein intake's low, you'll actually lose body mass even though you're eating an excess amount of calories.
 - People need to think more about increasing the amounts of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, vegetable oils and nuts which they eat, not about what foods they should do not eat.
 - Dr. Mozaffarian says increasing these six foods by about a serving each day would reduce obesity.

Could you increase your consumption of these six food types?

B. Expanding on (one of) the topics / ideas / issues in listening text

Topic = Healthy Eating

1. What are your favorite meals? Note them down and then describe them to your friend. Do you cook them yourself, or does someone cook them for you? What do you know about how healthy your favorite dish is? Guess how many calories, carbohydrates, grams of fat and how much protein is in your favorite dish. Then use this chart to work it out - <http://www.ntwrks.com/~mikev/chart1.html>. How close were your guesses about these four? Were you surprised about it? Does it change your opinion on your favorite dish?
2. Fast food is that which we buy from restaurants and often take away to eat, e.g., MacDonald's is a famous fast food chain. Do you ever eat fast food? If so, which fast food meal is your favorite? Why do you like it? What do you think about the increase in people eating fast food? Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of eating fast food. Compare these with a friend's. What fast food restaurants are popular in your country? Are they U.S. chains, or do you have fast food chains which are from your country? If so, how do they differ?
3. Do you take care to eat healthily? If not, why not? If so, how do you make sure that your diet is healthy? Do you calculate amounts of fat etc. in the food that you eat? What is the most unhealthy food that you eat? How much of it do you eat? Why does it appeal to you? If you know it is unhealthy, why do you continue to eat it? Could you ever stop eating it?
4. The report described how increasing the amounts of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, vegetable oils and nuts which we eat could help us lose weight. What your favorite types of: fruit, vegetable, and fish? Note them down and compare them to a friend's favorites. How much of them do you eat? Could you increase the amounts of these which you eat?

C. Extending discussion of (one of) the topics / ideas / issues in listening text

Topic = People's Weight

1. Have you ever been on a diet designed to lose or gain weight? If so, what made you do this? If not, why have you never felt it necessary? Was it for appearance or for health reasons? Did you do it yourself, or did you join a commercial program? If the diet involved changing what you ate, what did you eat and not eat? How easy was this? Did you enjoy being on a diet? Did

you manage to stay the same weight as you were when you finished your diet? Were you successful, or not, in losing weight? Why do you think that was? Would you diet again, or consider doing so in the future? Would you follow a different diet, if so?

2. Make a list of three famous supermodels you know about. What do they look like? What size or weight do you think they are? In European and American society, for women, being very slim is considered to be beautiful. Is this the same in your country? Why do you think it is like this? Make a list of three reasons why you think it is fashionable to be very thin. Compare your list with a friend's list. What is your opinion about it? Should the fashion industry use very thin supermodels? What effect do you think this might have on young girls? Is it healthy to be so slim?
3. How does your country view obese people? Is it a major concern? Why do you think people are becoming more overweight, make a list of the five key causes. Compare your list with a friend's. (Suggestions: lack of exercise; eating fast foods; busy lifestyles; fatty food tastes better; lack of understanding of foods; changes in children's entertainment e.g., X-box). Do you think the problem of obesity will increase or decrease? Why?

Audioscript

Sixty percent of U.S. adults are overweight and more than thirty percent are obese. But Americans aren't the only ones struggling with their waists. The World Health Organization reports that obesity has reached epidemic proportions globally, with more than one billion adults overweight.

Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian studies the relationship between diet and chronic diseases at the Harvard School of Public Health.

"We need sort of a shift, a paradigm shift, in our focus on and attention to diet."

But people trying to change their eating habits and reduce their weight must sort through a bewildering variety of diets. Some recommend cutting out carbohydrates. Others say cut out the fat, eat more protein, eat less protein. The messages can be confusing.

Dr. George Bray, at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Louisiana, wanted to find out if protein affects weight gain.

"This study was designed to examine the effects of differing levels of protein on total calorie intake."

Twenty-five healthy adults participated in the study. Daniel Kuhn was one of them. He and the others were overfed by almost a thousand calories a day.

"I was eating a lot of real butter for instance, real whipped cream and things of that nature that I don't normally indulge in."

All of the participants followed low, normal or high protein diets. The result: all of them gained weight.

"Fat storage was exactly the same with all three levels of protein. It was the calories that they ate that affected the body fat that they stored."

But those who ate a higher percentage of protein gained more lean body mass while those on a low protein diet experienced just the opposite.

"If your protein intake's low, you'll actually lose body mass even though you're eating an excess amount of calories."

Dr. Bray tells his patients to get on the scale regularly so they can catch added weight early. Dr. Mozaffarian says keeping weight in check is not just about eating less.

"We don't need to go down a list of 'avoid this, avoid that,' become the food police. It's really actually mostly foods that should be increased, it's fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, vegetable oils and nuts."

Dr. Mozaffarian says increasing these six foods by about a serving each day would reduce obesity, and help slow the epidemic of chronic diseases associated with it.

Dr. Bray's study on protein, calories and weight gain was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Carol Pearson VOA News.