

Why You Should Eat

All the Reasons Why Eating is the Healthiest, Strongest, Most Attractive Thing You Can Do for Your Body and Mind



- **EATING KEEPS YOU ALIVE.** Food is not optional - we need to eat to live. Remember: It's important to eat a balanced healthy diet. You can eat a lot of the wrong foods and still suffer from malnutrition. But eating foods that are bad for you once in a while is better than not eating at all.
- **EATING MAKES YOU ATTRACTIVE.** If you don't get the proper nutrients, your nails get brittle, your hair falls out, your skin gets dry and grows fur, and your breath smells horrible. Yo-yo dieting can scar you with stretch marks on your thighs, stomach, and even your upper arms.
- **EATING HELPS YOU LOSE WEIGHT.** Strange but true: When you don't eat enough, your body thinks it is starving. Your metabolism decreases and you will burn less calories. To stay alive, it hoards fat. If you go off your diet and then back on it, your body will continue this pattern and it will get harder and harder to lose weight. Even if you stick to your diet, you'll lose weight more slowly than you would if you ate sensibly.
- **EATING MAKES YOU HAPPY.** Not eating enough slows down your metabolism and makes you feel tired and bummed out. Continual dieting makes you more vulnerable to anorexia and bulimia, which lead to a distorted body image, low self-esteem, and depression and even death, explains Dr. Lillian Cheung, director of the Harvard Nutrition and Fitness Project in Boston.
- **EATING KEEPS YOU HEALTHY - SHORT-TERM.** Getting the proper nutrients keeps you from having all sorts of serious medical problems - anemia among them. In addition, not eating weakens your immune system, so you get sick a lot more easily. When you don't eat, your body temperature drops, leaving you cold and uncomfortable and turns your nails an unattractive shade of blue. If you lose too much body mass, it can affect your hormones and disrupt your menstrual cycle-causing problems that can last for years, like osteoporosis and infertility.
- **EATING KEEPS YOU HEALTHY - LONG TERM.** You build all of your bone mass before age thirty. Eating well and particularly eating foods rich in calcium is the best way to avoid osteoporosis, a calcium deficiency that makes some older women develop hunched backs and brittle bones. Not eating enough and not having your period can make you more susceptible to heart disease and high blood pressure later in life.
- **EATING HELPS YOU GROW.** Not eating right - especially when you're a teenager, can stunt your growth. You need the nutrients, vitamins and energy from food to build muscles and bone. If you're not eating a balanced diet, you could end up being shorter than you were meant to be.

- **EATING KEEPS YOU FROM OBSESSING ABOUT FOOD.** If you're hungry, you think about food. If you don't eat and stay hungry, you keep thinking about food - even to the point of becoming obsessed. Food is great, but you don't want to fixate on it.
- **EATING MAKES YOU STRONG.** Eating helps you run faster, jump higher, swim farther and make your body work for you in every way. It makes you more graceful and more coordinated. It also gives you more energy to get through the day and cope with all the big and little stresses that are thrown your way.
- **EATING MAKES YOU SMART.** If you don't eat, you zone out a lot more easily and you lose the ability to think abstractly and creatively, which can be major drawbacks - in the middle of class or the middle of a conversation. It can even be dangerous. When you don't eat enough, your ability to perceive when you've lost too much weight declines and your perceptions become "distorted", explains Dr. Gerald J. Bargman, founder and medical director of the Institute for Eating Disorders in Madison, Wisconsin.
- **EATING IMPROVES YOUR ATTITUDE.** A study conducted at The Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research, in Dallas, found that people who are sedentary and overweight are more likely to have negative misconceptions about food. The upshot? If you feel good about food, you're likely to get and stay in better shape.
- **EATING KEEPS YOU FROM BINGING.** Studies have proven that starving yourself all day can leave you so hungry that you'll eat everything in sight later, regardless of what it is or what it'll do for you (Oreos, ice cream, potato chips). When you go without eating, your blood sugar drops. When it drops very low, your brain assumes you're starving and drives you to eat. Usually when you're this hungry, you eat more than you need. Not only does that make NOT eating pointless, it also makes it harder for your body to process a lot of food all at once. Plus you metabolize foods most efficiently when you're most active. By the end of the day your metabolism slows down, and if you eat all your food then, you burn it at a slower rate. All this means that not eating wrecks your ability to eat smart.
- **EATING IMPRESSES GUYS.** "When a girl is comfortable eating in front of me, it shows she's a real person, and that's cool," says Sandro Tuzzo, eighteen, a freshman at the University of Colorado at Boulder.
- **EATING IS FUN.** Food looks good, smells good, and tastes good and our bodies crave it. In addition, eating is a major social activity. It's a reason for people to get together and have a good time.
- **EATING PROVES YOU'RE IN CONTROL.** The common belief that eating demonstrates a lack of willpower is nothing but a damaging myth. CHOOSING what to eat - and eating sensibly and well-proves that you're in charge of your life, and the eating disorder is not.

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