

[IMAGE]

Lining up at the Buffet? You May Eat Twice as Much

Faced with a large variety of foods, such as buffets offer, people eat considerably more than they would at a typical meal. Hardly surprising, but do you know how much more? The variety in your diet may influence the amount you eat more than you realize.

According to a recent review of related literature in the *Psychological Bulletin*, one study reported that subjects given a varied four-course meal ate 44% more food and 60% more calories than subjects given only one food for each of the four courses. The results of another study showed that participants consumed much more yogurt per course when offered three flavors instead of one. Texture, taste and appearance of food may all be related to the amount of food a person consumes.

It's no secret that we're all tempted to overeat when given a choice between a variety of foods. The message is clear: Stay away from the buffets! You can still eat a variety of foods, but select from vegetables and fruits ("good carbs") and low-fat, protein-rich items (skinless turkey, chicken, fish, soy/ tofu). Minimize the "bad carbs": breads, pasta and rice, and make sure that those you do eat are whole-grain products.

Reference:

Raynor HA, Epstein LH. Dietary variety, energy regulation, and obesity. *Psychological Bulletin* 2001;127(3), pp 325-341.

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