

[IMAGE]

## TV and Eating: A Bad Combination

By Editorial Staff

It's become commonplace: sitting down to your favorite meal with the television on. Perhaps it's the time crunch people feel that makes them want to digest their food with as much information (news, etc.) as possible. Or perhaps it's the comfort that comes from watching your favorite show in the rare moments you have to actually sit down and relax. But regardless of the reason, eating and watching TV may be a dangerous combination.

Here's why: Families that eat dinner in front of the television tend to eat less healthy food than when the TV is off, suggests research. These findings held up even when they weren't actually watching TV, but merely had it on in the background to generate "white noise."

This is the latest study to link what has been called "distracted eating" to unhealthy eating. In fact, research connects distracted eating to overeating, and "mindful eating" (as opposed to rushed / distracted eating) to the opposite. What's more, excessive television viewing has its own drawbacks beyond its impact on eating habits: At the most extreme, watching three or more hours of TV a day may increase your risk of early death compared to people who watch less daily television. Taken collectively, the evidence suggests we keep that TV off whenever possible and find healthier ways to enjoy our free time.

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