[IMAGE]

Eat Out Less, Live Longer

By Editorial Staff

It seems simple enough, but consider that most people probably haven't eaten out much in the past year, what with COVID stay-at-home orders, restaurant closures and other restrictions. That's all likely to change soon (or already happening, depending on where you live), and eating out will once again become an important way for people to get together, get out of the house – and avoid slaving away in the kitchen.

If you can eat out less, you'll benefit immensely when it comes to your health - in fact, you'll live longer, suggests research. People who eat two or more meals per day prepared away from home assume a significantly higher risk of all-cause mortality compared to people who eat.

Researchers followed more than 35,000 adults (ages 20 and older at the start of the study) who participated in the National Health and Nutritional Examination Survey 1999-2014. In evaluating deaths from any cause, cancer deaths and cardiovascular deaths during that 15-year window, researchers discovered that more people whose dietary habits included eating away from home frequently (at least twice a day) died compared to people who rarely ate away from home (less than once a week).

Published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, these findings were relevant even after considering other factors that could have contributed to / caused death during that time frame, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, body-mass index, and even other dietary and lifestyle factors. In other words, frequency of eating out was still an important factor.

So, how can people limit the amount of times they eat food from a restaurant, fast-food chain or other location that isn't their kitchen? It's a bit tricky right now since many are probably eager to get back to the "eating out" world to which they were so accustomed pre-pandemic. It starts with how you shop at the grocery store. If your fridge is empty all the time, eating out is a far-too-easy option. If it's stocked with healthy foods you love to eat, then eating out can be the occasional treat, rather than the potentially deadly lifestyle this study suggests it could be.

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