

## **Favorite snacks don't get boring for obese women**

*Last Updated: 2009-08-27 14:35:02 -0400 (Reuters Health)*

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - Non-obese women will get tired of having the same snack food day after day, but the same doesn't appear to be true for women who are obese, new research shows.

The experiment shows that making favorite foods "boring" is not likely to help obese people lose weight, Dr. George A. Bray of the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge noted in an accompanying editorial in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

Dr. Jennifer L. Temple and her colleagues from the University of Buffalo in New York had previously shown that normal-weight people who ate same snack food every day for two weeks liked it less, and found it less rewarding to eat. Temple and her team did the new study to find out if the same thing would happen in obese people.

They first asked 31 obese and 27 non-obese women to rate 19 different high calorie foods, including Doritos, potato chips, French fries, candy bars, and cookies, based on how much they liked the food and how often they ate it each week. For each, Temple and her team selected a "target" food that she liked and was already eating one to four times a week.

The researchers first tested how "reinforcing" the food of choice was by offering women the opportunity to earn points to win the food by playing a computer game, or to win points for time to read Time and Newsweek magazines. They then assigned each woman to eat 100 calories daily of their preferred snack food for two weeks, 300 calories worth of the food, or none of the food.

Among the women who ate 300 calories of the snack food daily, both obese and non-obese women liked that food less after two weeks. But while the food also became less reinforcing for the non-obese women, it became more reinforcing for the obese study participants, who played to win even more of the food than they had in the initial test.

Obese women who ate 100 calories of the snack food daily liked it less, but didn't find it more or less reinforcing; for the non-obese women in this group, eating 100 calories of the snack food each day didn't affect how much they liked it or how reinforcing it was.

Both overeating and drug abuse have similar pathways in the brain, Temple and her team note, which might explain why the obese women responded differently.

The study, they conclude, shows that having obese women eat the same snack food every day won't limit how much they eat.

**SOURCE:** American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, August 2009.

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