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Get Fit Now

How Your Friends Affect Your Weight

by Michael O'Shea
published: 10/18/2009



Forget the old saying "You are what you eat." These days, the theory is that you are, instead, what your friends eat. A whole raft of research has looked at the effect that our loved ones' diet and exercise habits have on our own health.

One long-term study of 12,000 adults found that a person's chances of becoming obese increased by about 40% if a spouse or sibling became obese--and jumped as high as 170% if a close friend became obese. Another study, in the *Journal of Consumer Research*, found that college students adjusted their food intake based on how much their companions ate. And it's not just adults who are vulnerable. New research says that children are subject to the influence of others as well.

5 ways to control your appetite

In a recent study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, researchers looked at the eating habits of normal-weight and overweight kids aged 9 to 15 when paired with friends or strangers. They found that participants eating with friends ate more than those dining with children they didn't know--and that overweight friends ate more than leaner friends.

"Youths' weight and eating habits are influenced by their friends' and peers' weight and eating habits," says Sarah-Jeanne Salvy, an assistant professor of pediatrics at Buffalo University's School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. "With one-third of kids and two-thirds of adults overweight or obese, there are fewer normal-weight people for children to emulate and less peer pressure to not overeat."

Fix your worst diet habits

So how can we address the problem? Forcing children to give up friends with unhealthy habits is extreme and may do more harm than good. "It's hard enough being an overweight child and dealing with all of the social pressures that come with that," Salvy says. "Not allowing overweight friends to eat together is not a solution--overweight kids have been found to eat more alone than with peers.

Parents need to help in a friendly way, never nagging or criticizing. Lead by example: Get more active and eat better as a family. Keep wholesome, nutritious foods in the house. Pack healthful lunches and snacks for your children to take to school."

7 ways to get kids to eat healthy

Peer pressure will always be an issue, and no child--or adult, for that matter--wants to be the odd man out. You can't control what others do or eat around your kids, but you can teach your family about good health at home and hope they take that knowledge with them when they leave. Settle for small victories--say, a piece of fruit in the morning with breakfast. If your kids get in the habit of healthy eating, they'll be better equipped to defend themselves against peer pressure. They may even start a more nutritious trend among their friends.

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Friends add weight??

by *oklanp* posted: 10/19/2009 04:34:AM

Friends add weight?? yeah thats definitely true. I believe in the saying that came feathers, flocks together. UHmm, means that when your friend is really want to eat always, it will give you appetite to eat lots also. Then maybe one from may even get [easy cash loans](#) to purchase the food you want.

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