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Variety in a meal enhances food intake in man

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Abstract

We find that in man satiety can be partly specific to foods eaten [12]. The possibility that this specificity of satiety leads to overeating if a wide variety of foods is readily available is tested here. The intakes of subjects offered a variety of foods in succession during a meal were compared to intakes when the same food was offered throughout. Subjects (n=36) ate a third more when offered sandwiches with four different fillings than when just one filling was offered ($p<0.001$). In another study subjects (n=24) ate significantly more when three flavors of yogurt (hazelnut, blackcurrant, orange) which were distinctive in taste, texture and color were offered than when offered just one of the flavors ($p<0.01$), even if the flavor was the favorite ($p<0.01$). However, when subjects (n=24) were offered three flavors of yogurt (strawberry, raspberry, cherry) which differed only in taste there was no enhancement of intake when the variety was offered. Having a variety of foods presented in succession during a meal enhances intake, and the more different the foods are the greater the enhancement is likely to be.

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