

20 Little Things That Make You Gain Fat

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20 Little Things That Make You Gain Fat



Written by on January 15, 2019

The average person gains one to two pounds (0.5 to 1 kg) every year (1).

Although that number seems small, that could equal an extra 10 to 20 pounds (4.5 to 9 kg) per decade.

Eating healthy and exercising regularly can help prevent this sneaky weight gain. However, it's often the little things that pack on the pounds.

Fortunately, you can take control by changing your habits today.

Here are 20 little things that are making you gain fat.

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1. Eating Quickly

In today's world, people are busier than ever and tend to eat their meals quickly.

Unfortunately, eating quickly might be making you gain fat. Studies show that people who eat their meals quickly are more likely to be overweight or obese.

This is because it takes time for your body to tell your brain that it is full. Thus, people who eat quickly can easily eat more food than their body needs before feeling full.

If you're a quick eater, try to consciously slow down by chewing more and taking smaller bites. You can learn more strategies to slow down your eating here.

2. Not Drinking Enough Water

Studies estimate that up to 16–28% of adults are dehydrated, with older people at an increased risk.

Not drinking enough water can make you thirsty. Interestingly, thirst may be mistaken as a sign of hunger or food cravings by the body.

In one study, scientists found that people who drank two cups of water right before breakfast ate 22% fewer calories at that meal than people who did not drink water.

Best of all, plain water has zero calories. Some studies have found that replacing sugar-sweetened beverages with water may reduce calorie intake by up to 200 calories per day.

If you find plain water boring, try adding slices of cucumber, lemon or your favorite fruit to add a dash of flavor.

3. Being Too Social

Having a social life is important for maintaining a happy work-life balance.

However, being too social might be making you gain fat. Social situations often involve food or alcohol, which can easily add unwanted calories to your diet.

In addition, research shows that people tend to eat like the people they are with. So if your friends eat big portions or prefer unhealthy foods, you're more likely to follow suit.

Fortunately, there are things you can do to stay healthy without giving up your social life. You can find clever tips to eat healthy when eating out here.

4. Sitting Too Long

In Western countries, the average adult sits for 9 to 11 hours per day.

Although it seems harmless, studies show that people who sit longer are more likely to be overweight. In addition, they have higher risks of chronic diseases and early death.

For example, an analysis of six studies of nearly 600,000 people found that adults who sat for longer than 10 hours per day, such as the average office worker, had a 34% higher risk of an early death.

Interestingly, studies have also found that people who sit the longest don't seem to make up for the time they spent sitting with exercise.

If your work involves sitting for long intervals, make sure you exercise either before work, during lunch or after work a few times per week. You can also try using a standing des

5. Not Getting Enough Sleep

Over a third of Americans don't get enough sleep.

Unfortunately, a lack of sleep is strongly linked to weight gain. This is due to many factors, including hormonal changes and a lack of motivation to exercise.

In one study, scientists analyzed the sleeping habits of over 68,000 women over 16 years. They discovered that women who slept fewer than 5 hours per night had a much higher risk of gaining weight than people who slept 7 hours or more.

What's worse, people who don't get enough sleep are more likely to gain belly fat, or visceral fat. Carrying more visceral fat is linked to a higher risk of harmful diseases like heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

If you're struggling to fall asleep, you can find helpful tips to help you fall asleep faster [here](#).

6. Not Having Time to Relax

Many people lead busy lives and never have time for themselves.

Sadly, not having time to relax could make you feel constantly stressed and gain some fat.

Studies show that constant stress is linked to belly fat. It seems that this stress makes people unconsciously crave unhealthy "comfort foods" to relieve stress and make them feel better.

Meditation is a great alternative for dealing with stress. A review of 47 studies of over 3,500 people showed that meditation helped alleviate stress and anxiety.

Aside from meditation, you can also try yoga, cutting back on caffeine and practicing mindfulness to help relieve stress.

7. Eating From Large Plates and Bowls

The size of your plates and bowls could have a significant impact on your waistline.

In an analysis of 72 studies, scientists found that people ate more food when it was served on larger plates and bowls than smaller plates and bowls without even realizing it. On average, people who ate from larger tableware consumed 16% more calories per meal.

Additionally, another study found that even nutrition experts unconsciously ate 31% more ice cream when they were provided with larger bowls.

This happens because larger plates can make a serving of food look smaller than it is. This tricks your brain into thinking you haven't eaten enough food.

Simply switching to smaller tableware may help you eat less food without feeling hungry.

8. Eating in Front of the TV

People often eat while watching TV, browsing the Internet or reading the paper. However, eating while distracted could make you eat more food.

A review of 24 studies found that people ate more food during a meal when they were distracted.

Interestingly, those who ate while distracted also ate significantly more food later in the day. This might be because they didn't realize how much food they ate during the meal.

While you're eating, aim to remove all distractions and focus on your meal. This is known as mindful eating and helps make eating a more enjoyable and conscious experience.

9. Drinking Your Calories

Drinking fruit juices, soft drinks and other beverages might be making you gain fat.

Your brain does not register calories from beverages the same way it registers calories from foods, meaning you're likely to compensate by eating more food later on.

In one study, 40 people consumed 300 calories from either whole apples, applesauce or an apple with their meal at six different times. Scientists found whole apples the most filling, while apple juice was the least filling.

Get your calories from whole foods rather than beverages. Whole foods take more time to chew and swallow, which means your brain has more time to process hunger signals.

10. Not Eating Enough Protein

A lack of protein in your diet might be making you gain fat.

This important nutrient can help you stay fuller for longer while eating less food.

Protein tells the body to make more fullness hormones like peptide YY, GIP and GLP-1. It also tells the body to make fewer hunger hormones like ghrelin.

Studies have also shown that a higher protein diet can help boost your metabolism and preserve muscle mass — two factors important for maintaining a healthy weight.

To increase your protein intake, try eating more protein-rich foods like eggs, meats, fish, tofu and lentils. You can find more delicious protein foods [here](#).

11. Not Eating Enough Fiber

A lack of fiber in your diet could be making you gain fat. This is because fiber helps control your appetite to keep you fuller for longer.

One study showed that eating an extra 14 grams of fiber per day may decrease your calorie intake up to 10%. This could lead to a loss of up to 4.2 pounds (1.9 kg) over four months.

Aside from appetite, the effects of fiber on weight loss are controversial. Nonetheless, the fact that fiber is filling may help protect your waistline.

You can increase your fiber intake by eating more vegetables, especially beans and legumes. Alternatively, you can try taking a soluble fiber supplement like glucomannan.

12. Taking the Elevator Instead of the Stairs

If you take the elevator instead of the stairs at work, you're missing out on an easy workout.

Research shows that you burn 8 calories for every 20 steps you climb. While 8 calories may seem insignificant, it can easily add up to an extra hundred calories per day if you often travel between many floors.

In addition, studies show that people who take the stairs have improved overall fitness and better heart and brain health.

What's more, research shows that taking the stairs may be faster than taking the elevator if you factor in waiting time.

13. Not Having Healthy Snacks Handy

Hunger is one of the biggest reasons why people gain weight.

When people are hungry, they are more likely to eat larger portions of food. In addition, hunger can increase your cravings for unhealthy foods.

Having healthy snacks handy can help combat hunger and curb your cravings for unhealthy foods.

Just remember to keep your portion sizes at meals in check. Otherwise, eating too many healthy snacks alongside large meals can still affect your waistline.

You can find many delicious healthy snack ideas here.

14. Eating Too Many Healthy Fats

Healthy fats like avocado, coconut oil and olive oil are an important part of a healthy diet.

Unfortunately, “having too much of a good thing” also applies to healthy fats. That’s because healthy fats are also high in calories.

For example, a single tablespoon of olive oil contains 119 calories. If you add multiple spoons of oil to your meals, the calories can add up quickly.

Although healthy fats are high in calories, they are nutritious and should not be avoided. Instead, aim to get most of the fat in your diet from whole foods like salmon and avocado. These foods are more filling than oils alone.

In addition, aim to eat a good balance of healthy fats, lean proteins, fruits and vegetables. This should naturally balance out your diet and lower your daily calorie intake.

15. Shopping Without a Grocery List

Shopping without a grocery list might be making you gain fat.

Not only can a shopping list help you save money, but it can also stop you from making impulse purchases, which are often unhealthy.

In fact, several studies have found that people who shop with a grocery list are more likely to eat healthier, carry less weight and save more money.

Here are a few tips for making a grocery list:

- Arrange foods by category so that they are easier to locate.
- If you’re familiar with the store, list your foods in order from closest to the entrance to furthest from the entrance. This will help save you time and avoid temptation.
- Make sure your grocery list matches your weekly meal plan so that you don’t have to go back to the store again.

16. Drinking Too Many Milky Coffees

Over 60% of Americans drink coffee daily.

This popular beverage is not only energizing, but it is also loaded with antioxidants and beneficial nutrients.

However, research shows that over two-thirds of Americans add cream, sugar, milk and other additives to their coffee, which can make it unhealthy. This means your coffee habit might be contributing to fat gain.

For example, a tall latte from Starbucks has 204 calories. Making a switch to black coffee can provide you with the same caffeine hit without the extra calories.

17. Not Eating Enough Fruits and Veggies

Fewer than 1 in 10 Americans meet the recommendations for fruit and vegetable intake. This is likely a big reason why 70% of Americans are either overweight or obese.

Not only are fruits and vegetables loaded with beneficial nutrients, but they are also quite low in calories, which is great for your waistline.

Many studies have also shown that people who eat more vegetables and fruits are more likely to be at a healthier weight.

If you find it hard to eat your fruits and veggies, here are a few helpful tips:

- Add some fruit to your morning oatmeal.
- Prepare some raw veggie sticks and take them with you to work.
- Add plenty of chopped vegetables to your soups, stews and lasagnas.
- Eat vegetable-rich soups and stews as it gets colder outside.
- If you find it hard to prepare fresh veggies, try mixing it up with frozen veggies.

18. Using Too Much Dressing

A single serving of salad dressing can contain more calories than your entire salad.

For example, common salad dressings like ranch, bleu cheese and Caesar dressings contain between 130 to 180 calories per standard serving.



To put this into perspective, it would take you 30 minutes of walking at a moderate pace to burn off just the salad dressing.

Instead, try to cut back on the salad dressings as much as possible, as they can easily add calories to your diet. Or better yet, opt for a low-calorie salad dressing like a vinaigrette.

19. Having Irregular Mealtimes

While delaying a meal every now and then isn't harmful, constantly eating at irregular times may be harmful to your health and your waistline.

In one study of 11 people, scientists found that people who had regular mealtimes felt less hungry before a meal and more full after a meal. This means people with irregular mealtimes may often feel more hungry and eat more food.

Most concerning is that people who have irregular mealtimes have a higher risk of chronic diseases. This includes metabolic syndrome, heart disease, insulin resistance and poor blood sugar control.

In theory, irregular mealtimes may promote these harmful effects by affecting your body's internal clock. This internal clock helps regular processes like appetite, metabolism and digestion, so irregular eating may disrupt their rhythm.

20. Not Eating Healthy on the Weekend

People often find it easier to eat healthy during the week because they typically have a daily routine with their work and life commitments.

Conversely, weekends tend to have less structure. In addition, people may be around more unhealthy temptations, which can lead to weight gain.

In one study, scientists observed the diet and exercise habits of 48 people. They found that people gained weight on weekends, as they ate more food and were less active.

Fortunately, you also have more time on the weekends to go outdoors and exercise. Moreover, you can avoid temptation by removing unhealthy foods from the household.

The Bottom Line

There are many little things that can make you gain fat.

However, you can make lifestyle changes today to account for them.

By following just a few of the tips in this article, you can make sure you get the most out of your healthy diet and exercise routine and avoid sabotaging it by accident.



Written by on January 15, 2018

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