

Smell THIS. Eat Less and Lose Weight?

Odor definitely affects your appetite.

When you smell something noxious, it turns your stomach so you don't want to eat. But since inhaling putrid stench is not anyone's idea of a fun diet, could mouthwatering aromas also help moderate food intake?

Dutch researchers say yes, reports the Dole Nutrition Institute.

The study: In a small, but scientifically precise, study, six men and four women with an average age of 36 were told to eat as much vanilla custard as they wanted. Each was randomly exposed to one of the following:

- a strong aroma of vanilla cream
- a weak aroma of vanilla cream
- no aroma

The results: Those who inhaled the strong aroma of vanilla cream consumed 5 percent less custard, compared to those who were exposed to a weak or no aroma.

So what? Eating 5 percent less may not seem like much, but when it's applied regularly to a 2,000-calorie-a-day diet, it translates into 100 saved calories a day. Add that up over a year, and it's an impressive 36,500 saved calories. And that means 10 pounds lost--or at least, not gained--over 12 months.

How can this be? Dr. Alan Hirsch of the Smell and Taste Treatment and Research Foundation says scents and odors play a big role in how full we feel, which is why those who lose their sense of smell often gain weight. He says that the aroma of apples and bananas work particularly well to curb appetites.

The takeaway: Slowing down to actually inhale the aroma of food as part of the sensory experience of dining will help you to eat mindfully--that is, learning to be in tune with how hungry you really are and eating less than you really want (or need).

Smell This Eat Less and Lose weight 060912