

## Overeating Doesn't Ease Stress

Many of us turn to food when we are feeling stressed, and this type of overeating has been cited as a cause for weight gain. Now, new research shows that it doesn't even do any good - that is, overeating does not reduce stress.

Swiss researchers investigated the consequences of carbohydrate or fat overfeeding on the metabolic effects of mental stress in healthy lean women. Subjecting them to mental stress increased heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen consumption rate and blood levels of stress hormones.

For three days, the women in one group received either standard feedings or overfeeding with 40% excess calories from either carbohydrate or fat. Those in another group received either standard feedings or underfeeding with a protein-sparing modified fast.

Those who were overfed with carbohydrate and fats did not show any reduction in the physiological measures of stress. In contrast, those who were underfed reduced the oxygen consumption stimulated by mental stress and showed improvement on other measures of mental stress.

Based on these results, it seems that if you're feeling stressed, binging on carbs and fats won't make you feel any better. You're actually better off by not eating.

**Source:** Seematter G, Dirlwanger M, Rey V, et al. *Metabolic Effects of Mental Stress During Over- and Underfeeding in Healthy Women. Obesity Research, January 2002;10:49-55. (Abs.)*