Weighing Oneself on a Scale Inhibits the Food Intake Enhancing Effect of Food Primes

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Abstract

Frequent self-weighing has been found to facilitate weight maintenance and the prevention of age-related weight gain. Three experiments were performed to examine the hypothesis that the act of self-weighing inhibits the increase in food intake elicited by food primes. In the first study, participants were provided with a small bowl of chocolate, and consumption of the snack was compared between those who self-weighed and those who did not. In the second study, participants were randomized into three groups: (a) those who watched food advertisements and did not self-weigh, (b) those who watched food advertisements and self-weighed, and (c) those who watched neutral advertisements and did not self-weigh. The third study added a negative control group that watched neutral advertisements and self-weighed. The results revealed that weighing oneself inhibits snack intake, as well as reduces the effects of stimulating food intake when watching a food advertisement. Understanding the mechanism behind this phenomenon means that we can harness the psychological power of stepping on the scale to help combat the prevalence of obesity in the United States.

Keywords

Nutrition; Psychology; Obesity; Health