



Popular Searches: skincare products natural skin care eating disorder treatment healthy meals fat burning workouts

Preteen Food Choices May Help Predict Eating Disorders Later



Researchers aim to identify best age to start preventive efforts

By -- Mary Elizabeth Dallas



THURSDAY, May 31 (HealthDay News) -- The food choices young girls make could help doctors predict if they are at risk for developing an eating disorder as teenagers, according to a new study that analyzed food diaries compiled over the course of a decade.

"The study is rare in that it's based on long-term observation of girls during their transition from pre-puberty through adolescence and into early adulthood," said the study's lead author, Abbigail Tissot, associate director of the division of behavioral medicine at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, in a medical center news release.

Children's Hospital Medical Center, in a medical center news release.

"This study tells us at what age we should be watching for these eating behaviors, giving parents and physicians useful tools for detecting girls at risk for future eating-disorder symptoms," she said.

In conducting the study, researchers in the medical center's divisions of adolescent medicine and behavioral medicine examined the types of foods 800 girls as young as 9 years old chose to eat. They compared the percentage of carbohydrates, fats and proteins they ate to their symptoms of eating disorders, such as poor body image, erratic eating habits and a preoccupation with being thin.

The study, presented recently at the International Conference on Eating Disorders in Austin, Texas, found the percentage of carbohydrates and fats girls ate at around the age of 11 helped to predict increasing dissatisfaction with the body by the age of 14. The researchers noted 15-year-old girls who ate little fat and a lot of carbohydrates were more likely to have erratic eating habits by age 19. This was particularly true for girls who were considered perfectionists.

"We know that perfectionists are at high risk for eating disorders," Tissot explained. "They are so committed to perfectly conforming to an unhealthy and extreme idea of beauty that they get carried away. Unfortunately, these girls who are committed to achieving thinness no matter what it takes are actually placing themselves at higher risk for being overweight or obese later in life."

The researchers noted their findings could help doctors improve treatment outcomes for eating disorders by identifying high-risk girls at a younger age.

"Eating disorders are notoriously difficult to treat, so prevention is critical," said Laurie Dunham, a registered dietitian at Cincinnati Children's, in the news release. "By assessing protein and fat consumption as early as age 9, we can detect which girls may go on to



answers to your health questions



Spring allergy relief for kids

For children, who are generally outside more than adults, allergy season can be an unhappy time.

Dining out when you're gluten-free

Lupus pain relief is within reach

6 ways Parkinson's impacts your mind

videos

wellness

hot topics



Food for Thought
3/1/13 1:27



Money, Marriage & Your Health
2/14/13 0:50

1 of 75

editor's picks

Try the virility diet

Should you get a sex coach?

15 weird things linked to heart attacks

develop eating disorders and step in to help before things get out of control."

A separate study based on the same food diaries also revealed that girls who skip lunch consumed more calories daily than those who ate lunch.

"Plenty of studies have been done on the effects of skipping breakfast," Tissot noted. "But at a time when kids' school lunch periods can vary widely, few studies have looked at the impact of skipping lunch."

Data and conclusions presented at medical meetings should be considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed medical journal.

More information

The U.S. National Institute of Mental Health provides more information on [eating disorders](#).

SOURCE: Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, news release, May 29, 2012

Copyright ©2013 HealthDay. All Rights Reserved.



Show Comments



Write a comment...



12 signs you may need a health makeover

Is your body trying to tell you something?

0 Comments



6 ways to add years to your life

Ditching cigs adds a decade to your life—this, plus other ways to live longer



12 body-shaming habits to squash

These comments may be more harmful than you think.



10 states where rare and exotic diseases lurk

Causes of the resurgence of some types of bacteria, viruses and disease-carrying insects.



10 unhealthy habits you need to break now

Find out which 10 daily habits you should break right now

15 simple ways to clean up your kitchen

If you're concerned about toxins in your food, protect yourself with some simple steps.

What your sleep position says about you

Depression may increase knee arthritis pain



Get Fit Tips from Fitbie

8 Body Sculpting Exercises You're Not Doing

Take Your Fitness in a New Direction

Sweat with Your Pet

20 Habits That Make You Fat

offers from our partner

The Belly Melt Diet

You Being Beautiful

The Lean Belly Prescription

You Losing Weight



Natural pain remedies

10 drug-free ways to tune out pain



10 most dangerous teen fads

Are your kids at risk?

featured on msn



Consumer Reports top picks



Bing Video: From rags to riches



The world's weirdest cocktails and spirits



10 things to put in your grilled cheese

1 of 140

Of the Day

News from HealthDay
msnNOW



All Better

Live Longer
Good Hygiene
Super Sleep
Stress Free

Healthy Family

Baby on Board
New Arrivals
Kids' Health

Sexual Health

For Women
For Men
Birth Control
STDs

For Boomers

Feeling Young
Caregiving
What Ails You?

More on MSN

Cooking
Diet & Fitness
Style
Living

[About Healthy Living](#)

MSN Healthy Living does not provide medical or any other health care advice, diagnosis or treatment. [See additional information](#)