

For a happier and healthier you!

SEVEN DEADLY DIET SINNERS

Which one are you?

Are you a picker or a snacker? A binger or a rusher? According to a recent survey*, all women have a dieting downfall determined by their "eating personality". Here's our guide to the seven types - with tips to help each one limit the damage of their bad ways.

By Michele O'Connor

1 Rushers



Most women claim to be "rushers", who make bad diet choices due to lack of time.

"We all lead busy lives and juggling work, family, friends, housework and other

commitments can be a real challenge," says Dr Jacquie Lavin, head of nutrition and research at Slimming World.

"It's easy to reach for a ready-meal or for the local takeaway menu."

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

"Plan a weekly menu and then, to save time, do an online supermarket order and get it delivered," says Laila Lewis, a nutritional therapist and founder of nourishingbynature.co.uk.

"Prepare as much as possible for the week ahead on a nonworking day. Cook in bulk and freeze meals so you can just get them out in the morning and reheat when you get home."

Make lunch for work the night before, says Izzy Cameron, nutrition and weight management specialist at Diet Chef. "Shop-bought items can be costly - in money and calories - and they also usually contain higher levels of salt, sugar and preservatives."



2 Pickers

"With chocolate, crisps and other sugary snacks so readily available and heavily marketed, it's easy to see why so many of us end up falling into the trap of snacking on unhealthy foods between meals," Jacquie says.

"But eating between meals doesn't always have to be a diet downfall, as long as you are eating the right things, since regular eating actually helps to speed up the metabolism," explains Izzy.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Eat protein with every meal and snack to keep you fuller for longer, advises Laila.

Plan snacks just like meals, suggests Jacquie. "Chopped fresh fruit drizzled in fat-free yoghurt or with low-calorie jelly is a great way to satisfy your sweet craving, while savoury fans might prefer vegetable sticks with salsa made out of red onion, tomato, cucumber, coriander, mint and lemon juice."

And drink water! Often when you think you are hungry your body is actually crying out to be rehydrated, explains Izzy.

3 Bingers

Three-quarters of people trying to lose weight admit to indulging at the weekend - with 46% of women regularly consuming 8,000 calories, according to a recent survey.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

If you know you will be having a takeaway on Friday night, take soup into work for lunch that day.

In restaurants, go for tomato-based sauces, not creamy ones and have boiled and steamed dishes rather than fried or crispy. And don't add butter.

"Don't completely deny yourself things during the week so you are desperate to binge at the weekend," advises Laila. "Aim to follow the 80:20 rule on a daily basis - 80% healthy choices and 20% of what you fancy."



4 Comfort eaters

Food can make us feel better but the blood sugar "crash" that follows can lead us into a vicious cycle - reaching for more to drive sugar levels back up, explains Jacquie.

"It doesn't solve emotional problems and we can also end up feeling guilty afterwards, which can make us turn to food for comfort again."



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Before you eat anything, ask yourself if you're bored, tired, angry, stressed, embarrassed or hungry? If you're feeling anything other than hunger do something else - like reading, listening to music, getting some fresh air or phoning a friend, or go for a brisk walk instead.

Exercise releases endorphins - chemicals that increase feelings of happiness and wellbeing. You'll also be doing something to make yourself feel fit and look good - a double whammy.

Don't ban comfort foods completely, but try to control them. For instance, have a few squares of good-quality dark chocolate rather than a massive bar of Dairy Milk.

5 Rewarders

"It's common to reward ourselves with food, but this sort of emotional eating can lead to weight gain," explains Jacquie.

"Slimming - and keeping weight off in the long term - is not just about changing what we eat. We also need to work through the long-held emotional connections that we have with food so we can see that we don't need to feel ashamed or guilty."

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Consider joining a slimming club, suggests Jacquie. "You'll get together with like-minded people who have similar obstacles and goals."

Find other ways of rewarding yourself that don't involve food, such as buying a new dress, getting tickets to a show or giving yourself some me-time.

Try not to think of sweets, treats and chocolates as banned foods as this makes them all the more attractive, advises Izzy.



6 Socialisers

Alcohol is fine in moderation but binge drinking and skipping meals so you can drink more has serious health consequences.

"Consuming calories in the form of alcohol isn't recognised by our appetite systems in the same way as food," explains Jacquie. "Alcohol stimulates appetite and often goes hand in hand with high-calorie snacks, such as crisps."

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

"Eat a small, healthy meal or snack before going out to avoid feeling hungry and to control those urges to go mad, especially after drinking," suggests Laila.

Check out a restaurant's website or menu beforehand and order first so you're not swayed by anyone else.

"Choose high-protein dishes, such as grilled chicken breast or steak, ask for sauces or dressings on the side and have vegetables rather than chips!" advises Izzy.

Alternate alcohol with soft drinks or ask for a diluted wine spritzer or shandy. Aim for at least three no-alcohol days a week and never skip meals to drink.



7 Settlers

Many women gain weight when they're happily settled in a relationship.

"Falling into the trap of eating and drinking the same as your partner, in the same quantities, screams diet disaster," warns Izzy.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Make lower-fat, healthier versions of family favourites, like spaghetti bolognese or curry - your partner won't notice.

"Make simple swaps, such as opting for leaner cuts of meat, adding more vegetables into dishes and grilling, steaming, roasting or frying in low-calorie cooking spray," says Jacquie.

Go back to basics on portion sizes.

"Follow the rule of palm", advises Izzy. "Dish up palm-sized portions of protein and

carbohydrates and two-palm portions of vegetables. Eat any more than this and you will likely be overeating."

Use a smaller plate than your man. "Research shows these make people eat less and feel fuller quicker," says Laila.

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