

Study: Eating out equals eating more

By Randy Dotinga, HealthDay

A study finds that people who eat out consume an average of about 200 calories more a day than when they cook at home.

They also take in more saturated fat, sugar and salt.

The study has limitations. It doesn't say anything about whether frequent restaurant diners are unhealthier than at-home eaters, and it doesn't take into account the potential benefits of eating out, such as socializing and reducing the stress of cooking.

Still, the findings show that "eating out at restaurants should be the exception, not the norm," said study co-author Lisa Powell, a professor of health policy and administration at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Powell said the researchers wanted to better understand the role of restaurant food in people's diets. "We know that parallel to the rising rates of obesity, Americans have been increasingly eating food away from home, and they now take in, on average, about 600 calories a day from restaurants," she said.

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