

# Avoid three big meals

## digestive system works better with small light meals

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Have you ever seen a ptarmigan too fat to walk? Or a caribou too fat to run?

No, these are serious questions and let me make an important point. Scientists have observed that when left alone, animals rarely get fat.

Recently at Michigan State University, Drs. Leveille and Romsos found that when fed two large meals a day instead of being allowed to "nibble" at will, that rats and pigs began to develop more fat cells and with time, became overweight.

In Chicago another doctor found that patients who stopped eating two heavy meals a day and changed to eating several small meals a day were able to drop the fat content in his blood back to normal.

For years, doctors have been putting diabetic patients on "nibbling" diets. In other words, by taking food in many small amounts, the body does not have to work so hard to cope with such a high blood sugar and, thus, the need for insulin goes down.

And the fact that so many diabetics lose weight on this diet means that it might also work for obesity.

Yet people could not understand just why they would, lose weight if they were eating the same amounts of food each day but just spread out into many small meals. The answer was found in the stomach which expanded 40% larger to accommodate a large meal.

That meant that these people were storing twice as much fat and sugar at once since the body

could not process these large amount that quickly.

Another thing we can do is to look at just what we are eating all day. It is just as easy to nibble on an apple or an orange as it is to nibble on a candy bar.

This "nibble diet" really does make a lot of sense. It was found that you do not have to cut your calories down to drop your weight a bit if you spread your food out over six or seven meals. It might take a week or two to adjust to the new schedule, but it is not that bad. And if you get hungry in between, try a few crackers, fruit or a cold vegetable (carrots and celery are especially good).

There are a few ground rules if you are really serious about losing weight: first, you must cut your calorie intake to below what you ate before. In other words, less calories, yet, it must be nutritionally balanced. Second, your goal must be to get to and keep at your desired weight.

This cannot happen if you keep switching back and forth from little meals to big ones. You have to be prepared to stay on your routine for a long time.

Third, don't expect any dramatic weight loss. It is never as easy to take weight off as it is to put it on. In animals, scientists find that it takes only nine days before they start adding on layers of fat.

To stop this fat layer cell production, it takes them at least six weeks of "nibble diets" to return to normal! Finally, do not interpret this nibble diet as freedom to eat all the junk foods that you want to.

Although you can eat some of them, you have to begin to add up calories to see that you do not eat more than you should.

There are other things that you

can do. There is a device that you can buy that can help you take off weight and keep it off. Last year over four million americans bought one. It is called a scale.

A scale can tell you how much weight you have to lose to improve both your health and your looks.

Next it can help you determine what kind of a diet you need to be on. And finally, it will help you keep at your new weight once you get where you want to be. You should get on your scale first thing every morning and see how you are doing.

How much should you weigh? If you are a man, try and remember how much you weighed when you were 25; 22 if you are a woman. That is when your skeleton stopped growing.

According to Dr. Jean Mayer of Tufts University, that is the weight that you should stay at for as long as you live. There are exceptions to this of course, but that applies to most individuals.

In addition to weighing yourself, keep a chart and tape measure handy. Men should measure their midriffs (bellies) and women should pay attention to their hips and thighs. That is where all of the fat likes to build up.

Before I forget, use the same scale all of the time. Sometimes scales differ from one to another. Even though yours is different from that in the clinic, go ahead and use it to make day to day comparisons.

Finally, don't give up. Everyone knows that pounds do not vanish quickly. They go away step by step. And your scale is your best friend in telling you the truth on how you are doing and your conscience is your guide on what to do about it if you do not like what you see.