

# Why stress makes you overeat

To combat stress, our bodies produce extra quantities of the hormone ghrelin, which in turn makes us overeat.

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## HEALTH NEWS IN BRIEF

**P**EOPLE who turn to food when they are stressed or depressed are driven by hormone in the body that send an increased hunger signal to the brain.

Researchers found that the body produced extra quantities of the hormone ghrelin to combat the effects of stress-induced depression and anxiety, which in turn prompts overeating.

This hormone synthesis seems to be part of the body's natural defence against stress, as it tends to reduce typical depressive and anxious behaviour. However, it also boosts appetite, leading to comfort eating.

Experimenting on mice, researchers noted that chronic stress causes ghrelin levels to go up and that behaviours associated with depression and anxiety decrease when ghrelin levels rise.

They said the findings raise the prospect that blocking the body's response to ghrelin might help people who comfort-eat to control their weight.

**Depression leads to diabetes and vice-versa**  
PEOPLE with depression have a higher risk of developing the most common form of diabetes than others.

Though diabetes can lead to depression, a new study revealed that depression can trigger diabetes. Researchers

tracked a group of 5,000 men and women between ages 45 and 84 for about three years.

They found that people with symptoms of depression were 42 per cent more likely to develop diabetes by the end of the study than those without such symptoms. They also found that the more serious the symptoms, the higher the risk of diabetes.

They took into account factors including obesity, lack of physical activity and smoking, and found that the risk for diabetes was still 34 per cent higher in patients with depression.

They found people who had elevated symptoms of depression were more likely to eat more, exercised less and more likely to be smokers. And as a consequence, they were also more obese. These are all known risk factors for type 2 diabetes.

### Use 'tastants' to lose weight

TRYING to lose weight? Maybe you should sprinkle special seasonings and sweeteners on your food as these "tastants" stimulate the sense of smell and taste, making people feel fuller

faster and helping them to eat less.

Researchers said there are various reasons why "tastants" would work. They fuel "the phenomenon where the first bite of the food tastes great, but the last bite doesn't taste so good."

Another reason is that these powerful smells and tastes act to enhance sensory-specific satiety and send messages to the brain that the person is "full".

The researchers said this approach uses natural physiology to help people lose weight, which is different from other approaches.

### How to prevent 'Blackberry thumb'

OLDER people who spend the day e-mailing, instant messaging and surfing the Web on a handheld device are most likely to suffer from repetitive stress injuries.

Dubbed the "Blackberry thumb" because of the popularity of the wireless personal digital assistant (PDA), this repetitive stress injury occurs because these devices rely almost solely on the use of your thumbs for typing, instead of your fingers.

The best way to handle it is to "take a break from the device".

Experts suggested that it is important to pay attention to your workspace ergonomics to make sure you are not putting any extra stress on your thumb and hands.

— Agencies



People who are stressed are driven by a hormone in the body that sends an increased hunger signal to the brain.