

What Would Batman Eat? Help Children to Make Healthier Fast Food Choices

Having trouble getting your child to make healthier eating choices at their favorite fast food restaurant? Priming them with the simple phrase: 'What would Batman eat?' may be the answer! In a recent field study, 22 children in a summer camp were asked if they would like French fries or apple slices with lunch. On one day, they were shown pictures of real or fictional role models and asked what the role models would choose, before making their own decision. The use of this simple prime increased the amount of children who selected apple slices from 9.1% to 45.5%! Making the connection between eating healthy and being an admirable adult clearly helps children to make healthier eating decisions. So, next time you are at a fast food restaurant, be sure to ask them 'What would Batman eat?' (*Journal of Consumer Research*, March 2012)



Stopping at a Serving Size Will You Eat Less if your Food has STOP Signs?

When you sit down with a bag of potato chips, do you know how many you are really eating? We hypothesized that dividing a large tube of potato chips with visual markers would reduce intake within a single setting, which we called the Red Chip Principle. To test this, college students were given tubes of stacked potato chips to munch on while watching a movie in class. Red-colored potato chips had been inserted at regular intervals to act as visual dividers every seventh or fourteenth chip. The divider chips were either dyed red or flavored with tomato and basil. Students who had their snack segmented ate more than 50% less, which translates to about 250 calories! As modest sized portion packaging is becoming more common this results show it can be an effective strategy to prevent overeating (*Health Psychology*, February 2012)



Child Plating Preferences Are Kids Just Born Finicky Eaters?

Should you plate food for your child the same way you do for yourself? In our study, pre-teen children and adults were shown 48 different photographs and asked for their preferences based on different dimensions of food presentation. These included the number of components and colors on the plate, the position of the main component, crowded plate versus an empty plate presentation, organizational levels and design. The results suggest amazing opportunities to encourage more nutritionally diverse diets among children. While adults prefer three components and three colors on their plates children preferred seven components and six colors, more than double the adult preference of three! The bottom line: break food into small piles and make sure they don't touch! (*Acta Paediatrica*, January 2012)

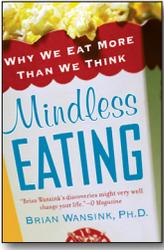


Is Meat Male? Gender Stereotypes Affect Perceptions and Behavior

In popular culture, certain activities are often associated with a particular gender. Male activities include football, stock broking, and fishing, while female activities include cooking, shoe-shopping, and babysitting. We wondered whether a particular food, such as meat, had gender connotations too. Results from six experiments using college students and adults clearly showed that there is a psychological connection between meat and maleness. Furthermore, this connection may affect behavior too. So, if you want to get men to eat tofu, make it look more like a steak! (*Journal of Consumer Research*, October 2012)



Our Mission: To discover Why, What, When, and How Much People Eat!



Intel Inside:

- Child plating Preferences
- Is Meat Male?
- Stopping at a Serving Size
- What Would Batman Eat?



A Message From the Director
Dear Friend in Food,

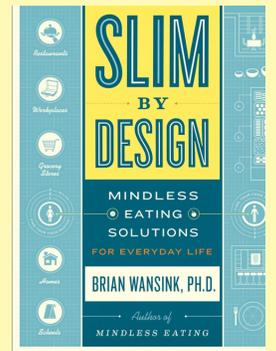
There's a lot of easy ways to eat better and to eat less. That's what we at the Food and Brand Lab are constantly looking to discover and to test. This newsletter has some of our latest findings that can help both you and your family eat better. You'll learn how to get your kids to eat vegetables and how to plate their food so they finish it all. You'll also learn why you might like tofu while your spouse doesn't . . . and what you can do about it.

If you like these findings you might also like our bi-monthly feature in the AARP magazine, called "Chew on This." We'll post these at our web-site <http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/index.html>.

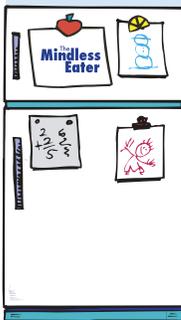
Also, if you want to learn about other cool findings, check out our Key Discoveries page. You'll find the best of our recent discoveries as well as new tips . . . and cartoons you can use in your publications, presentations or website.

Last stay tuned for our new book, "Slim By Design: Mindless Eating Solutions for Everyday Life." It's coming out on March 19, 2013.

All our best,
Brian Wansink



Refrigerator Research: Tear-out tips for your fridge



1. Think 20% less

Dish out 20% less than you think you might want. We have found that people can eat 20% less without noticing it. A 30% decrease is noticeable but 20% is still under the radar!

Mindless Eating, p. 34



2. See it before you eat it!

Put everything you want to eat on a plate before you start eating. We find that people eat about 14% less than when they take smaller amounts and go back for seconds or thirds. Mindless Eating, p. 56



3. Keep an eye on what you eat!

Keep those chicken wings or ribs bones on your plate and nest your empty cups. You'll eat or drink less if you see what you've already consumed! Mindless Eating, p. 56

