

Study: Food storage linked to consumption patterns

By Angus Chen, NPR

Keeping food out of sight could be a way to keep it out of your mouth. That's the hunch of Charles Emery, a psychologist at Ohio State University, anyway. His latest research suggests that how food is set up around the house could be influencing how much people eat and, ultimately, how heavy they might be.

There are a lot of factors that scientists say explain obesity – defined as a body-mass index over 30 – from genetics to lifestyle changes to socio-economic status.

But Emery says the home environment and how it may influence eating behaviors has largely been left unexamined. So his team decided to “look at every aspect of the home environment related to food,” he says.

They also found obese participants tended to keep more food visible in the places they spent the most time compared to non-obese people. If the bedroom was one of their favorite places at home, then snacks were also usually there in plain sight. In other words, food was almost always close at hand for the obese individuals. “It doesn't take a big leap of faith to say if you're spending most of your time where there's more food sitting out to see, that's going to make it harder not to eat,” Emery says.

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