

The Dark Side of Variety

How Variety Causes Overeating



Objective:

To learn that you will eat more food if given a variety of options than you will if given only one option.

Warm-Up:

1. Explain why you think you would eat [more/less/the same amount] of pudding if given both chocolate and vanilla to eat versus just one flavor.

Activity:

Materials:

- two bags of skittles
- large bowl
- empty egg carton

Procedure:

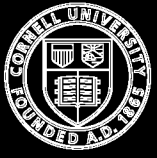
1. Empty one bag of skittles into the large bowl.
2. Empty the other bag of skittles into the egg carton (put each color into separate holders.)
3. Put the two containers side-by-side.
4. Ask the group for two volunteers.
5. Have one volunteer take a serving of skittles from the bowl, have the other volunteer take a serving of skittles from the egg carton.
6. Before the volunteers eat their skittles, count the number of skittles each volunteer took and have the class discuss which person seems to have a greater variety of skittles.
7. Repeat this activity with vegetables. Offer one kind of vegetable (ie broccoli) in the large bowl and several different vegetables (ie broccoli, carrots, celery, etc.) in the egg carton.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think variety causes people to eat more?
2. When could this be harmful?
3. What would be the bright side of variety, situations where having a greater variety would be beneficial?

Take-Away Facts:

1. If a bag of trail mix is put in 20 bowls, people will think there is a greater variety than if the same amount was put into just a few bowls.
2. When variety increases, people eat more. For example, when people were offered three different types of yogurt, they ate as much as 300% more than when they offered only one type.
3. Having a variety of foods available makes people think that they will enjoy the foods more.



Making Huge Proportions More Manageable

How Plate Size Affects Portion Size



Objective:

To learn that smaller plates allow for more control over portion sizes, ultimately decreasing the amount we eat.

Warm-Up Questions:

1. How large are your dinner plates? Your salad plates?
2. Is there a difference in size between the plates you use for special occasions and the plates you use for everyday meals?
3. How large are the plates used in restaurants- larger or smaller than your plates at home?

Activity:

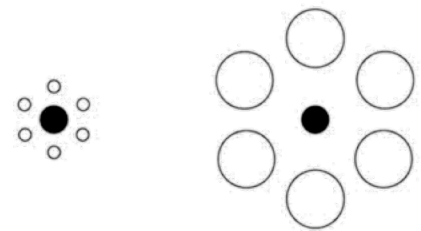
Materials:

- 12-inch dinner plate
- 8-inch or 10-inch dinner plate
- one cup measuring spoon

Procedure:

1. Place one cup of mashed potatoes on both the large and the small plates.
2. Put the two plates side-by-side.
3. Ask the participants to vote on which plate has a larger amount of food- tally the votes.
4. Discuss the results and any differences the participants see.

The Size-Contrast Illusion:
Which Black Dot Is Bigger?



The Horizontal-Vertical Illusion:
Which Line Is Longer?



Discussion Questions:

1. What kind of effect can plate size have on our consumption and portion control?
2. How do you think you could modify the effect of portions by using smaller plates? Do you think it would affect your food intake?
3. How can this information be used to increase your consumption of fruits and vegetables?

Take-Away Facts:

1. Plate size can be used to aid in portion control- the larger your plate the more likely you are to serve large portions.
2. The same size portion looks larger on a smaller plate than it does on a bigger plate.