

“Do I need more food in the Winter?”

One expert tells the cold, hard truth about why this season leads to overeating.

Can I allow myself more calories now that it's cold outside?

If you are constantly exposed to cold temperatures (like the proverbial squirrel packing away acorns for the winter), you do need more energy to maintain your core body temperature in the winter. But if you're human (i.e. you spend the majority of your day in heated indoor spaces) not so much.

I crave comfort food 24/7. Why?

Your cravings may have less to do with the cold and more to do with the lack of sunlight that contributes to the phenomenon known as winter blues. In fact, a study published in the medical journal *The Lancet* suggests that a drop in serotonin, the body's “feel good” chemical, has been linked to increased appetite in some people (particularly those who suffer from

REALLY?

American soldiers need to eat **25 to 50 percent** more calories during cold weather operations than in warm weather ones due to heavier gear and the extra effort it takes to walk in snow.

Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD). And, for most of us, what we naturally crave at this time of year veers more toward cheesy and gooey than light and healthy.

So am I less likely to lose weight in the winter?

No, unless you hibernate on your couch all season. Like other hibernating animals, your body contains enzymes that promote fat storage. These enzymes kick into high gear come winter. But you can fool the system by piling on some layers and venturing outdoors for a walk. A bonus for your efforts: The temps will likely cause you to walk a lot faster than normal. Just remember to bring a water bottle because you don't sweat as easily in the winter, and may not feel as thirsty, which can increase your risk of dehydration. [WW](#)

Squirrels need to store more fat in winter—you don't!

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