

But My Brain Says the Taste Feels So Gooooood!



[Please forgive inclusion of photos. I take no responsibility for stimulating your cravings, but it is done to clearly identify items used in research study to arrive at scientific results.]

Is it possible that you are corrupting your own brain circuitry with that upsized cheeseburger, milkshake or heaven forbid slice of cheesecake! If you are a connoisseur of any of these mid 20th century tasty treats, there is a laboratory rat study with your name on it.

According to Paul Kenny, associate professor and co-author of a new study published in *Nature Neuroscience*, March 28, being **overweight is not just issues of control over weight and eating but rather one of “feeding behavior.”**

The study looked at rats that had access to their regular food – in addition some were given unlimited access to high-fat human foods, others were given access to the same human food

for 1 hour a day, and others only had their usual – bland rat chow.

The outcome was that rats with **unlimited and limited access to high-fat human foods developed patterns of overeating and obesity** (no surprise there, when your only option is bland rat chow). Kenny suggests that the feeding behavior increased beyond the normal calories needed due to high-fat foods acting as a pleasure trigger on the brain's circuitry.

The pleasure trigger is activated by **dopamine**, a neurotransmitter that activates the brain's neural circuitry of receptors.

Dopamine has a number of different functions but the focus of this research was on how the dopamine receptors responded to high-fat food. The **high-fat food excited the dopamine receptors the same as sex and substance abuse drugs**.

It seems that **overeating becomes an addictive feeding behavior** as it takes more calories to release the dopamine pleasure sensation. According to Kenny, it's possible that both the behavior is changing the brain circuitry and a prior chemical irregularity in the brain may play a role in overeating.

The role of high-fat human food as an instigator of an addictive overeating behavior is far from resolved, **since other scientific research points to binge eating of carbohydrates and sugars, especially high fructose sugar**.

The lesson here is if you are a rat it's healthier to stick with the rat chow.

If you are a human you might want to stick to the healthier taste of human chow and save the cheeseburgers, milkshakes and cheesecake for special occasions.

This way you can explain to your partner there needs to be more sex because it's good for your dopamine brain receptors. Just an idea.....

By Joyce Hansen