

“Do I Need to Eat More in the Winter?”

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

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

If you live in an igloo or a tent year-round and you're constantly exposed to cold temperatures, you definitely need more energy to maintain your core body temperature in the winter. But if, like most, you spend the majority of your day in heated indoor spaces, you don't need to consume any more calories than you normally would.

But I crave comfort food 24/7. Why?

The foods our culture cherishes at this time of year veer more toward heavy and hearty than light and healthy. In addition, for some people, the desire to devour heavier foods like mashed potatoes or beef stew has less to do with the cold and more to do with the lack of sunlight that contributes to a condition known as seasonal

REALLY?
Soldiers need to eat **25 to 50 percent** more calories during cold-weather operations due to heavier gear and more treacherous conditions. The average citizen? Not so much.

affective disorder (SAD). 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 (particularly in people who suffer from SAD).

So am I less likely to lose weight in the winter? Unless you follow a squirrel's lead and hibernate, no. Instead, why not venture outdoors for a walk? The cool air is not only refreshing; it will likely cause you to walk a lot faster than you usually do. Just remember to pile on a few easy-to-remove layers so you won't get too warm when you pick up the pace. Also, bring along a water bottle: You may not sweat as much or feel as thirsty as you do in the warmer months, but you're still at risk for dehydration. [www](#)

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Squirrels don't move much in winter—but you should.



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