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Want to lose weight? Putting tomatoes in your sandwich will make you feel full

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A few slices of tomato can help make you feel full, according to a new study

Forget fancy diets and strict exercise regimes.

The key to keeping trim could simply be eating lots of tomatoes.

Eating the fruit leaves you feeling satisfied, suppressing the urge to snack, which is one of a slimmer's main pitfalls.

It is thought tomatoes are rich in compounds that alter levels of appetite hormones, making them an easy - and cheap - way to keep hunger pangs at bay.

The findings emerged from research into the benefits of enriching white bread with fruit and vegetables.

A small group of normal weight women aged between 18 and 35 were offered cream cheese sandwiches that had been made with either white bread or bread that had been enriched with carrots or tomatoes.

It was thought that the extra fibre provided by the carrot would make the carrot-bread lunches the most filling.

Instead, the tomato bread was the most satisfying, a nutritional conference in France heard.

Researcher Dr Julie Lovegrove, of Reading University, said: 'They were given the sandwiches in a random order and we recorded how full they said they were.'

'It was a small study, and we can't yet say what the crucial tomato ingredient is, but the results were statistically significant.'

Further research will focus on whether eating tomatoes alters levels of appetite-regulating hormones, including ghrelin.

A lower level of ghrelin makes us feel full.

However, it is not known which part of the tomato dulls the appetite, but it may be lycopene, the pigment that gives tomatoes their red colour.

Lycopene is already credited with a host of health benefits, from warding off cancer to boosting fertility.

It is thought to be particularly effective at combating prostate cancer, protecting against the disease and slowing its progress when it does develop.

It may also ward off a host of other cancers, including breast, cervical, skin, lung, bladder, and pancreatic.

Previous studies have shown tomatoes can help heart health, with regular helpings of ketchup and tomato juice sending cholesterol levels plummeting in a matter of weeks.

Tomato-based dishes may also help protect against sunburn and keep the skin looking healthy into old age.

Tomatoes are also rich in vitamin C, which aids the healing of wounds and helps the body absorb iron.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1224925/Put-tomatoes-sandwich-want-feel-full.html#>