

## Media Release

### Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## Project asks participants to snap their meals for research

Many people photograph their meals for social media- but University of Tasmania Psychology researchers are asking participants with a BMI of 25 or higher to photograph their food and drink for a new research project instead.

The aim of the project is to find out about what in our everyday environment is related to eating and drinking in people with a BMI of 25 or higher.

Participants will be asked to photograph and log everything they eat or drink and answer a few questions about their mood and the situation they were in at the time.

Lead researcher, Psychology academic Dr Benjamin Schüz, said the team wants to know how situations influence what and how much people eat.

“We tend to think that we eat when we are hungry, but in fact most of our eating behaviour is driven by things in our environment,” he said.

“There is a lot of research suggesting that just seeing food, seeing someone else eat or passing a shop can increase food cravings.”

The researchers hope to learn more about the role of mood, company, and the surroundings in driving people’s eating and drinking.

“Most research so far has focused on thoughts alone, and many recommendations therefore are based on information only, but we want to find out more about the power of the situation itself,” Dr Schüz said.

“We want to know what those situations are, as objectively as possible. If we know what they are, then we can think about how to handle those situations effectively and give people who want to change their nutrition strategies they need to keep a healthy diet.”

Dr Schüz said there is a chance that photographing their food and drink will make participants focus on their choices more than usual, but the researchers want people to act naturally and not curtail what they normally eat or drink.

**To participate in the study:** The researchers are hoping for 30 - 50 participants with a BMI of 25 or higher from Southern Tasmania.

Participants will be asked to carry a custom-programmed mobile phone for two weeks to log their meal data.

Participants in the study will be reimbursed for their time with a \$50 Coles Myer shopping voucher.

Participants' data on what they eat won't receive feedback and won't be connected with any one individual, but will help the researchers find out more about those tricky situations that make sticking to a healthy diet more difficult.

**Those interested in participating can contact the researchers on their website: [tiny.cc/nutritionstudy](http://tiny.cc/nutritionstudy) or via phone: (03) 6226 1093.**

**Information released by:**

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