- Food service

# Common online food orders that could worsen eating disorders

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The online food market of today is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it offers households quick, convenient access to fresh produce at the click of a button.

However, on the other hand, the array of tempting, often unhealthy foods can unintentionally fuel an eating disorder. The relative obscurity of these culprits makes it even more crucial to scrutinise everyday online foods, highlighting their potential hidden dangers.

UNVEILING THE HIDDEN CULPRITS

A variety of everyday online food options are subtly feeding eating disorders, often operating unnoticed under the guise of modern convenience. Let's explore them.

• Ultra-processed foods: A simple click delivers a box of your favourite cookies to your doorstep.

But these are often high in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats, leading to overeating and weight gain.

• Meal replacement drinks: Marketed as nutritionally complete, they can trigger a disconnect with real, healthy food and foster a convenience-over-health mindset.

• Artificial sweeteners: Promoted as healthy substitutes for sugar, some studies suggest they can contribute to a sweet taste addiction, leading to an increased craving for overly sweet foods.

• Diet foods: Low fat, low sugar, low carb — these often over-processed foods can reinforce the notion that a restrictive diet is the only way to maintain a healthy weight.

• Fast food delivery: Delivering unhealthy foods directly to your door encourages frequent consumption, which can lead to overeating and unhealthy eating habits.

• Online snack subscriptions: These make snack foods readily available, promoting constant, mindless eating.

• Virtual cooking tutorials: While not a food product per se, they often encourage the preparation of high-calorie, indulgent meals, neglecting balanced, nutritious options.

• Size misconceptions: Online images often don't represent the actual size of food products. This leads to consuming larger portions than intended.

• Misleading health claims: Online food labels and descriptions often exaggerate health benefits. Buyers beware.

• Digital peer pressure: Online influencers showcasing daily meals can distort perceptions of normal eating, promoting restrictive or binge eating habits.

BALANCING CONVENIENCE AND HEALTH

Jason Adler from Repocket says, "Being aware of what you're ordering and why, supported by accurate information, is a crucial first step towards establishing a healthy relationship with online food."

So, what can you do to ensure the convenience of online food benefits your eating habits?

• Do your research: Check product ingredients and nutritional information.

• Know portion sizes: Check the product size before you order.

• Diversify: Don't stick to the same foods. Try new, healthy foods and recipes.

• Maintain a regular eating pattern: Regular, balanced meals are key to a healthy diet.

• Listen to your body: Eat when you're hungry and stop when you're full. This may seem straightforward, but it's vital.

With the advent of the digital era, maintaining a healthy relationship with food has become more challenging. But being aware of potential pitfalls can empower you to make better food choices, both online and offline. Remember, food is fuel for the body, mind, and soul.

Don't let the convenience of online shopping blind you to the importance of a balanced, quality diet. In the virtual world of food, knowledge is health. Let it guide you.

As Adler points out, "Your health is the sum of your habits. Make informed food choices a habit, and a healthier you is not a wish, but a certainty."

As we progress into this new communication potential, the implications will reverberate through our mobile devices and the global community. — Repocket.