

## - Eating customs

## Mukbang why we and overeat

We may not overeat to the levels of mukbang hosts, but we actually often eat more than we need to.

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THERE have been many newspaper articles recently on people binge-eating and then dying suddenly. Is this called mukbang?



Mukbang is actually a livestreamed video for viewers – especially those on Tiktok or Instagram – to watch the person who made the video eat.

People, especially younger ones, do this as content to get as many views as possible.

But viewers don't want to watch people eat ordinary amounts of food.

Mukbang is characterised by the enormous amounts of food consumed during the streaming by one person, or even a few people.

Some viewers eat alongside the mukbang host(s) as they livestream.

Is mukbang a Thai word?

Mukbang is a Korean word that comes from the word meokbang, which is Korean for eating (meong-neun) and broadcast (bangsong).

The hosts who make mukbang videos are called mukbang BJS, short for broadcast jockeys.

Why did some of these mukbang hosts die?

Some of them died due to the sheer complications of overeating.

Others died due to the complications of an unhealthy and excessive diet over time.

One mukbang host died of a brain haemorrhage, which basically means she had a stroke caused by bleeding in her brain.

Another died after 10 hours of non-stop consumption of chocolate cake, seafood and chicken because her stomach simply ripped open.

I believe many Malaysians tend to overeat from time to time, especially at a buffet where you can stuff yourself with as much as you like. Is that dangerous? We are not talking to the levels of mukbang livestreamers.

We probably overeat many times in a month.

It doesn't matter if we are at a buffet or a free-for-all party, or even at home when we have second and third helpings.

Even people who consider themselves poor can overeat, filling themselves up with rice.

Yes, overeating is dangerous in its immediate and long-term effects.

Why do people overeat?

For Malaysians, it is mostly because food is plentiful and delicious.

Or at a buffet, we simply want to make the most of our money.

Some people have a habit of overeating because as a child, they did not have much to eat.

Some people eat because of stress.

Some people eat because they have stopped smoking and they need something else to fill their mouths.

But most of the time, people overeat because they eat too fast and do not realise that their bodies do not need any more food.

You see, there are two ways the stomach can send a signal to your brain to say you are full and no longer need food.

Once you've eaten enough for your body's needs, the stomach sends a signal to start the production of hunger-related hormones that will tell the brain that you are full.

However, it takes 20 minutes for this process to occur.

This is because these hormones need more time to be produced, and they travel through your bloodstream, which relies on the heart to pump it around your body.

However, once your stomach is really full – and yes, this is not the same as being just full enough to meet your body's needs – a different type of signal is triggered.

These electrical signals from your stomach muscles will signal the brain through nerves with lightning speed, reaching your brain and telling it instantly that they are stretched and the stomach is about to be full.

But by this time, you have actually already eaten far more than you need.

Therefore, you are encouraged to eat slowly, so that the hormone signals have time to reach your brain before you eat too much.

What happens to my body if I overeat?

Let's talk about the immediate effects first.

Overeating can immediately cause your stomach to expand beyond its normal size to adjust to the large amount of food you have just consumed.

This can cause it to push against the other organs around it and immediately make you feel uncomfortable.

Your clothes may feel too tight (I bet you've had that feeling before!), and you can feel tired and drowsy.

Next, organs like your stomach, liver and pancreas are required to work harder.

They have to secrete extra hormones and enzymes to break the food down.

Your stomach needs to produce more hydrochloric acid, especially if you consume a lot of food high in fat and protein.

If you have a tendency to overeat, this acid may flow back into your oesophagus and cause heartburn.

This is particularly likely if you eat a huge meal close to bedtime and lie down fairly soon after.

So many people in this world suffer from a whole spectrum of acid reflux diseases.

Your stomach may also produce gas, leaving you with an uncomfortably full feeling.

You may also belch or pass gas.

Your body's metabolism may speed up as it tries to burn off those extra calories.

You may feel hot, sweaty, or even dizzy, because your body is redirecting its efforts from your brain to your gastrointestinal tract.

Your blood sugar starts to spike.

What are the long-term effects of overeating then?

Weight gain and obesity, definitely.

And with it, all the complications that come with obesity, including insulin resistance, heart issues, high blood pressure, stroke, cancer and diabetes.

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