



CHEW YOUR FOOD WELL, LIKE YOUR GRANDMOTHER SAID

You may have thought it was an old wives tale – to chew your food well because that will be good for you.

Well, in Japan the government recommends to the public that they chew their food 30 times before swallowing to prevent obesity. All over the world, grandmothers have been telling growing children to eat slowly and chew a lot, even if they did not specify the number of times to chew.

Recent small studies have suggested that thorough chewing stimulates the release of important intestinal molecules that help reduce appetite and food intake in obese people. There are two messengers that are implicated in the control of blood glucose, triglycerides levels and bodyweight. There are called GLP-1 (plasma glucagons-like peptide) and peptide YY.

Produce more good messengers

The studies undertaken asked people to eat an early morning meal over a 20-minute period that consisted of bread, margarine, a boiled egg, steamed vegetables, a banana and milk. It was found that people who chewed 30 rather than five times before swallowing, produced more of these molecules. It is thought that this intervention can help people lose weight.

All too often, we are in a hurry and gulp down our food as we rush to another appointment. Grandmother's old saying of "chewing your food thoroughly and taking time over your meal" now appears to have scientific merit.