

Slow Down to Slim Down

If you're noshing while you read this, put your fork down and take a breath. Taking more time to eat can help you consume fewer calories, according to a recent review of studies published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. For some simple ways to put the brakes on your dining experience, try these tips from D. Milton Stokes, Ph.D., R.D., of One Source Nutrition in Connecticut. —*Diana Kelly*

- 1 / Don't eat where the food is being served.** When your meal is in front of you, it's easy to keep chowing down, but when you have to get up to get seconds, you have time to decide if you really are still hungry.
- 2 / Use salad plates for meals.** Even if you fill the plate, you'll naturally choose smaller amounts of food.
- 3 / Swap your fork for chopsticks.** "Most of my clients aren't proficient users of chopsticks, and this slowness is a gift," says Stokes.

SMART BUGS

Not all bacteria are bad. In fact, probiotics—microorganisms found in food and supps—have numerous potential benefits, including improved digestion. Research even shows that people with more diverse bacteria in their gut tend to weigh less, says Molly Morgan, R.D. "I recommend varying

the type of probiotics you consume for greater diversity," she adds. Here, a few of our fave probiotic options.

• **Kefir:** Most varieties of this fermented dairy beverage have 10 types of probiotics, compared with yogurts, which typically have only two to five strains of good bacteria.

• **Tempeh or miso:** Made from fermented soybeans or other grains, tempeh has a

nutty flavor. Miso, a Japanese seasoning, is made from fermented soybeans with salt and the fungus koji-kin.

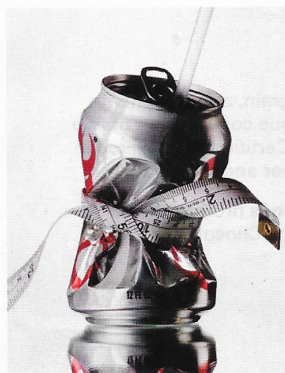
• **Pickled vegetables:** Unpasteurized sauerkraut contains at least three strains of helpful bacteria. Pickles made in a sea salt and water solution (not vinegar) encourage the growth of beneficial bacteria. Kimchi is made by fermenting vegetables with lactic acid bacteria.

BOOST YOUR HEART HEALTH

The next time you're dressing your salad, just drizzle on some olive oil. A new study found that the combo of nitrates and nitrites in leafy greens and healthy fats in olive oil provides a compound in the body (called nitro fatty acids) that has the effect of protecting against hypertension and heart disease.

For the biggest nutritional punch, start with spinach or kale instead of iceberg or romaine, advises Erin Palinski-Wade, R.D., since they are both great sources of antioxidants, vitamin K, and vitamin C. Then add in about 1 to 1½ tablespoons of pure, cold-pressed extra-virgin olive oil. —D.K.

Use chopsticks to slow down eating and tune into satiety cues.



The Deal with Diet Soda

A new study reports diet soda can help people lose weight, and that **water isn't necessarily superior to diet soft drinks** when you're trying to shed pounds. The study (funded by the diet beverage industry) involved 303 participants and found that those who consumed beverages made with artificial sweeteners lost an average of 13 pounds over 12 weeks, while those who stuck with water lost an average of nine pounds. The diet drink group also reported less hunger during the day. —D.K.