

Consequences of restricting (a.k.a. starving your body)

When you don't feed your body enough calories, macro-nutrients and micro-nutrients then it can't function at its best. You literally aren't giving your body the fuel that it needs!

Often there are unintended consequences of low-calorie or fad diets including ...

- 😓 **LOW ENERGY** - Tiredness, muscle weakness and/or shakiness, maybe feeling faint or dizzy because your body doesn't have the energy that it needs to carry out daily tasks
- 😞 **CHANGES IN MOOD** – you get **HANGRY** (because of low blood sugar), irritable, feeling overwhelmed, anxiety*, depression*, feeling isolated and hopeless, loss of sense of humour
- 🧠 **POOR BRAIN FUNCTIONING** – brain fog, short attention span/finding it harder to concentrate, feeling on high alert, thinking about food often (feeling obsessed). Also, if you're not giving your brain enough fuel then you can find it harder to be flexible in how you think and can become stuck in unhelpful thought patterns and routines.
- 🩺 **PHYSICAL HEALTH issues** - e.g., dry skin, hair loss, inability to regulate body temperature, muscle soreness, anaemia, changes in blood pressure
- 🍬 **SUGAR CRAVINGS** as a result of low blood sugar, low endorphins + serotonin*
- 💊 **HORMONE IMBALANCES** – e.g., leading to thyroid problems and amenorrhea (a.k.a. your periods stop), low sex drive
- 🚫 **DIGESTIVE DISCOMFORT** – your body doesn't have enough food to push through the system! People can cut out even more foods out at this stage due to worry it is the food that is causing the problem. In some cases it might be the food itself, but in many cases my clients actually need to eat a higher quantity and variety of food, which feels scary if they've been in a diet mindset!
- 😞 **SOCIAL ISOLATION** – as people often can no longer enjoy food (e.g., a meal out, a birthday cake) with family and friends, irritable -> more frequent arguments, etc.
- 😞 **AND** What you probably didn't guess is that restricting calories can lead to a preoccupation with food in people who were not previously that interested in food, and curiously, can lead people to feel **WORSE** about their body and fatter than before they started dieting!

*because you haven't eaten the raw materials necessary for your body to produce the correct neurotransmitters

So what's the alternative? Eat to Nourish.

Eating for physical and mental health doesn't need to mean deprivation and dangerously low calories. I believe in eating all food groups in order to balance your blood sugar, and make delicious meals full of variety (to help your good gut bacteria). Since I started eating this way most of the time, I feel so much more stable. Plus, I have seen clients who's cravings and binge eating reduce when they started to eat more balanced meals (e.g., complex carbohydrates, protein and healthy fats).

If you are stuck in a restrict-binge cycle, then check out the Nourish Foundations group course to help you ditch the diet and stop binge eating.

<https://eatingdisordertherapist.co.uk/StopBingeEating2021>