

Are You Really Eating What You Post?



In the world of social media, sharing recipes and pictures of healthy food has become quite the trend. However, what users usually post and what they actually cook may be two different things, according to findings from a recent study published in the Journal of Medical Internet Research.

The study analysed hundreds of Pinterest users and influences and found numerous photos of healthy foods that were liked and posted. The food items typically featured poultry, fish, and vegetables. However, the researchers also found that users who were more actively posting pictures of healthy food ONLINE were more likely to engage in recipes that were high in fat, sugar, and total calories OFFLINE.

One can say that people posting on social media platforms like Pinterest tend to post recipes that are more socially rewarded with likes and repins. They do so because they want to adhere to social norms set by celebrities and influencers who promote healthy, low-calorie foods. But when it comes to recipes that they are more interested in, the tilt is always towards food items that are high in fat and sugar. The disconnect between popularity and engagement is thus clearly evident. Users are only interested in clean eating to the extent of posting about it on social media. There is very little application of this “ideology” in their real life.

Recipe sharing is one of the most popular interest areas on Pinterest. If used properly, this platform could be used to reinforce healthy eating habits. However, as this study shows, reposting and liking is limited to healthy food items, but engaging and sharing of finished dishes is more likely to be dishes that are high in fat, sugar, and total calories. Users are thus engaging more with unhealthy recipes.

If social media could be used effectively to make healthy food look like the *treat*, there could be an impact on people’s approach to healthy eating and their food selection. However, social media is such a confusing realm that it is often hard to figure out what is fake and what is real.

Source: [George Mason University](#)

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Published on : Tue, 18 May 2021