

“Secret scoffers” revealed as 7m dieters hide naughty food

More than a third of women currently on a New Year’s diet are secret scoffers, it emerged recently.

A massive 36 per cent – or SEVEN million - of the nation’s ladies watching their waistline are hiding food or eating it in the dark.

Handbags, under the bed and clothes drawers emerged as the favourite places to keep secret supplies.

But they’ll also gorge on naughty foods in the car, walking down the street or even in a sunbed.

A spokesperson for LighterLife which carried out the study of 2,000 women, said the problem is growing – along with the population:

“We are shocked just how much the desperation levels have soared compared with the same poll four years ago.”

The study of 16-65 year olds found 85 per cent have been on a diet in a bid to lose weight, compared with 61 per cent four years ago. They tried to slim down an average of eight times.

Alarmingly 28 per cent of women admitted that they have only stuck to a diet for 24 hours, with three quarters only managing to resist temptation for under a week. The average of the longest time to diet emerged as 15 weeks.

The research found one in six secretly eats on a weekly basis, and one in 10 does so every two or three days.

More than half (51 per cent) admit to lying about what they’ve eaten – with husbands (46 per cent), mums (45 per cent) and best friends (24 per cent) the recipients of fibs.

Four in 10 avoid the truth because they feel ashamed of the food they devour and 39 per cent knew it was the unhealthy option.

But three in 10 fear being lectured, a third left feeling guilty and a quarter were supposed to be on a diet.

One in five have even used fast food outlets as an easy way to eat and hide away from friends, family or work colleagues.

The recession has also allowed women the excuse not to buy healthy food but munch on pizza (23 per cent), microwave meals (16 per cent) and chips (15 per cent) instead.

A desperate 53 per cent of girls have even felt they would rather have food than sex (compared with 31 per cent four years ago), with chocolate, takeaways and desserts the top choice to sway them away from the bedroom.

It also emerged six in ten admit to craving and dreaming about food.

Four in 10 see food as a 'pick me up', but one in five tend to reach for their comfort food when feeling depressed or stressed and one in 10 slump in the sofa with their favourite food because they're lonely.

But eight in 10 have regretted eating something which was unhealthy.

A desperate 36 per cent have thrown away food to stop themselves eating it because they are worried about putting on weight.

An untrusting 35 per cent believe their partner, family member or friend has sabotaged their diet one way or another.

A spokesperson for LighterLife said: "Four in ten have faced temptation witnessing their husband eat something delicious in front of them and a quarter have been invited out to a swanky restaurant for dinner.

"But if you do want your partner to lose weight, keep a close eye on them around 11am and 3pm, which emerged as the peak secret-snacking time."

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The comparison of the two surveys over a four year period show:

Survey questions	2006 findings	2010 findings	An increase of
Women who admitted to dieting	61 per cent	84 per cent	↑ 38 per cent
Dieters who said their shortest diets failed in under five days	A third	A half	↑ 60 per cent
Around one in five of the dieters had managed to stick to a diet for more than a year	A fifth	A sixth	↓ 20 per cent
Women who admitted having a comfort food	54 per cent	73 per cent	↑ 35 per cent
Those who thought they were addicted to their comfort food	A quarter	Nearly half	↑ 100 per cent
Chocolate sited as favourite comfort food	65 per cent	54 per cent	↓ 18 per cent
Dieters who have tried to give up specific foods to lose weight	72 per cent	73 per cent	↑ 1.5 per cent
Women who admit to giving up chocolate in order to slim	31 per cent	75 per cent	↑ 150 per cent
Dieters who have thrown away food to stop themselves eating it	27 per cent	36 per cent	↑ 34 per cent
Dieters who had thrown away chocolate to stop them eating it	30 per cent	42 per cent	↑ 40 per cent
Women who have hidden food or eaten in secret	A fifth	A third	↑ 65 per cent

Dieters who have lied about what they have eaten	A quarter	Half	↑ 100 per cent
Those who admitted to having felt they would have preferred food to sex	A quarter	Half	↑ 100 per cent
Dieters that think partners have sabotaged their diets	15 per cent	35 per cent	↑ 135 per cent
Dieters who have regretted eating something	64 per cent	79 per cent	↑ 24 per cent
Dieters who had bought clothes knowing they were too small	22 per cent	38 per cent	↑ 73 per cent
Those who bought clothes too small who spent more than £30	A fifth	A fifth	No change
Bought clothes too small as an incentive to lose weight	44 per cent	29 per cent	↓ 35 per cent
Women who bought clothes too small that still have the clothes	38 per cent	30 per cent	↓ 22 per cent
People who used the clothes which were too small as rags	9 people	35 people	↑ 290 per cent
Weird places women hide food	Children's room, handbag, under bed, bathroom cupboard	Toy box, filing system, shed, glove compartment	
Weird places women snack	The woods, cars, and even a school toilet	Public toilets, under a sunbed, in the bath	