

Complete the outline of the reading by dragging the words from the list into the appropriate blanks.

## Two New Weapons in the Weight Wars

According to a 2012 World Health Organization (WHO) study, one out of every six adults in the world is **obese**. Between 1980 and 2008, obesity doubled around the world, and WHO estimates that by 2015, more than 700 million adults will be obese.

The future looks **grim** unless we change our eating habits soon. There's new hope in a surprisingly simple solution: imaginary eating. Research has shown that as we eat something, we begin to lose interest in it. This reaction is called *habituation*. A new study suggests that habituation can happen in our minds alone. We don't have to actually eat anything.

Usually when we want to lose weight, we try not to think about the food we **crave**. "That may not be the best strategy," says psychologist Carey Morewedge. He and his colleagues wondered whether it might be better to repeatedly imagine eating food as a way to reduce cravings. They set up an experiment in which 51 people were divided into three groups. One group was asked to imagine inserting 30 coins into a laundry machine. This action is similar in motion to eating candies one at a time. Then they imagined eating three chocolate candies. A second group was asked to imagine inserting only three coins into a laundry machine followed by mentally eating 30 chocolate candies. The last group was asked to imagine inserting 33 coins into a laundry machine and nothing more. Each person was then given a bowl that held 1.5 ounces (40 grams) of chocolate candies and told to eat as many as they wished. When they were done, the bowls were weighed. The group that imagined eating 30 chocolate candies ate less than both the group that imagined eating three candies and the group that didn't imagine eating anything at all.

But mental habituation isn't the only psychological factor that influences our eating habits. A 2012 study indicates that the size of our plates also plays a role. It is well known that a circle appears smaller when it's inside a much larger circle than when it's inside only a slightly larger circle. This is called the Delboeuf illusion. The same serving of soup inside a big bowl looks much smaller than it does in a bowl that barely holds it. When people use larger-sized plates and bowls, they end up serving themselves as much as 31 percent more than they usually eat.

Plate color is important too. "If you present red sauce and pasta on a red plate or pasta with white sauce on a cream-colored plate, you'll over serve," explains researcher Koert van Ittersum. The brain has to work harder to tell where the food ends and the plate begins, making a large serving appear smaller. Using white plates, which provide a strong contrast to most foods, helps reduce serving sizes.

While these two weapons in the war against obesity are easy to apply to our eating habits, they are still no substitute for controlling *what* we eat. Neither imagination nor any type of plate is a substitute for making healthy choices about the food we put in our mouths.

\* **Obese:** dangerously fat. **Grim:** dark and depressing. **Crave:** strongly desire

1	Higher	31	larger	lower
Delboeuf	mental habituation	Ittersum	700	

### Methods to Control Portions

#### Obesity Statistics

- \_\_\_\_\_ out of 6 adults is obese
- by 2015, \_\_\_\_\_ million expected to be obese

#### Role of Imaginary Eating

- group that imagined eating more candies ate less
- \_\_\_\_\_ can reduce how much we eat

#### Role of Plate/Bowl Size

- \_\_\_\_\_ illusion makes same portion look on a smaller plate
- larger plate/bowl size leads to \_\_\_\_\_ percent larger servings

#### Role of Plate/Bowl Color

- \_\_\_\_\_ contrast between food and plate/bowl leads to smaller portions

Select the option that best completes each sentence based on the reading.

1. The world's population is getting \_\_\_\_\_ obese.

less

more

2. By imagining that we are eating something we crave, we \_\_\_\_\_ our desire for it.

increase

decrease

3. To eat less, people should serve the same portions they usually eat on \_\_\_\_\_ plates.

larger

smaller

4. When your food is the same color as your plate, you're likely to serve yourself \_\_\_\_\_.

less

more

5. Using white plates tends to \_\_\_\_ serving sizes.

decrease

increase

6. The article concludes that what we eat \_\_\_\_ than how we serve it.

is less important

is more important