



Desktop Dining

Do you eat at your desk? If so, you are not alone. 83% of us eat both meals and snacks at our desks. While common, this may not be the best way to enjoy a meal.



Is it safe to eat at your desk?

Our desks are full of things that we touch often, but probably don't clean often - keyboard, phone and mouse, among others. Germs that make us sick can live on these surfaces. The flu virus, for example, can survive on your desk for up to 48 hours! Eating at your desk gives these germs a quick and easy ride into your body on your food and hands, increasing your chances of getting sick. Crumbs left on your desk can also introduce new germs and possibly unwanted pests.



Is it healthy to eat at your desk?

Limiting distractions and avoiding screens during meal time are good strategies for mindful eating. Not only do distractions take away from the enjoyment of the meal, but they also keep us from listening to our internal signals that let us know we are full, making it easier to overeat. The time saved by multi-tasking at lunch may cost your health in the long run.



Tips for a better meal

Invite a co-worker to lunch. Research suggests that eating together can improve productivity and cooperation. Take advantage of your onsite cafeteria or other common space. The change of scenery as well as the movement it takes to get there will both offer benefits. If your desk is your only option for eating, make sure you clean it regularly and wash your hands often. Give yourself a technology break while you eat to allow your focus to be on enjoying your food and recognizing your hunger cues.

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References:

1. Desktop Dining Survey. Available at homefoodsafety.org. Accessed December 1, 2016.
2. KM Kniffin, et.al. Eating Together at the Firehouse: How Workplace Commensality Relates to the Performance of Firefighters. Human Performance Vol. 28, Iss. 4, 2015.