

SAMPLE #1

Can Curries Help You Lose Weight?

Curry is a staple in South Asian cuisine, but has found its place as a dish that is beloved by many across the globe. Known for its complex flavor profile and mouth-burning spices, curry uses a blend of different herbs and spices to achieve the unique taste unlike anything else in the world. The popularity of curry has even prompted a prestigious [award system](#) like the Asian Curry Awards, where restaurants around the UK are recognized for their innovative fusions on the classic dish.

Since curry is enjoyed by many cultures and cuisines across the globe, there are discussions on how it can affect health. This is because some of the spices used in the dish are known to have benefits for the body, such as improved digestion and weight loss. As such, it is important to know more about the components of curry to better understand the potential weight loss properties of the dish.

History of curry

Curry has been around for a long time and is thought to have originated as early as 2500 BCE in what is modern-day Pakistan. However, the Western perception of curry thinks of it as a dish, but the word itself has been misunderstood. The word curry comes from the Tamil word “kari”, which refers to sauce and does not automatically connote a dish. Additionally, renowned writer and Indian food specialist Colleen Sen notes that [curry](#) is not a single spice, nor is it related to the tree of the same name. The word “curry” is a catch-all phrase for a blend of spices used to season meat, fish, or vegetable stew, which can be prepared as a powder or made into thick paste to put into a dish.

While it has South Asian origins, the global trade routes and colonization helped spread curry into different parts of the world. Countries like Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Caribbean islands, and even the UK have their own localized version of curry which is seen as an integral part of their cuisine. For example, Japanese curry is known for leaning into sweeter flavors, since some varieties add honey and grated apples into the sauce. Alternatively, the Southeast Asian variants of curry are more umami, since they use ingredients like shrimp paste to add into the complex mix of flavors already present.

Despite the different variations in making curry, the base is often flavored with spices such as cardamom, turmeric, cumin, coriander, and chili peppers. Some other ingredients like onion, garlic, ginger, mustard seed, nutmeg, star anise, and bay leaves are also included to add fragrance and further enhance flavor. These ingredients not only create a mouthwatering dish, but some also have health benefits that enhance the nutritious elements found in curry.

Can curry aid in weight loss?

Generally, curry is a healthy and nutritious dish, since it doesn't contain a lot of saturated fats. Additionally, the blend of spices and meat incorporated into the dish have their own health properties that boost the health factor of a curry meal and can induce weight loss. For example, curries that use poultry, lean meat, mushroom, and fish are packed with protein and are great for [natural weight loss](#). Eating protein not only helps maintain muscle mass to boost your metabolism, but it can make you feel full for longer and keep your stomach satisfied. This is important when going through the weight loss process, since gaining control over your eating habits is an effective way to sustainably shed off the extra pounds in the long run.

In addition to protein, the use of turmeric in curries can also help induce weight loss. Turmeric is a powerful spice and has been historically used as herbal medicine in some cultures, as it has anti-inflammatory properties and is an effective antioxidant. Furthermore, some studies showed that the [benefits of turmeric](#) may also include weight loss. Its active ingredient, curcumin, is responsible for the spice's anti-inflammation effects, which can suppress the inflammatory markers that contribute to obesity. Additionally, base spices such as cumin, ginger, and garlic are great for aiding weight loss and can also be found in most variants of curry.

Other variants of curry also have other ingredients that can further promote weight loss. For example, the curries found in Southeast Asia usually use a heavy amount of coconut milk to create a creamy and rich texture for the dish. One of the [health benefits of coconut milk](#) is its ability to encourage weight loss, as it contains a type of fat called medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs). Some studies found that MCTs can reduce the buildup of fat and help suppress appetite to aid in the weight loss process. Coconut milk also boosts heart health and has antioxidants that can protect from disease, making it a nutritious addition to curry.

When eating curry for weight loss, though, it is important to remember that it should still be eaten in moderation to maintain momentum in losing weight. Additionally, curry is often paired with carb-heavy foods like rice and flatbread (naan or roti), which can induce weight gain when eaten in excess. Portion control is a great way to practice natural weight loss, since you can manage the amount of calories you consume and avoid overeating.

Curry recipes to try

Seeing how there is a wide variety of curries available in the world, it can be daunting trying to choose one to remake and incorporate into your diet. Mostly, though, you want to look for curry recipes that are high in protein or are vegetable-based to incorporate fiber that can help with weight loss. For something quick and easy to make for dinner, you can try making [vegetarian rainbow curry](#) that uses carrots, potatoes, green peas, bell peppers, green beans, and corn to have a filling and nutritious meal.

Or if you want something with more protein, [creamy mushroom matar curry](#) is hearty, rich in flavor, and has enough spice kick to make for a more interesting meal. Other curry variants

you need to try are Thai fish curry, Japanese tonkatsu curry, Caribbean curry crab, and Indonesian chicken curry. Some variants of curry can be challenging to cook, especially since it incorporates a lot of spices, and may turn out saltier than intended. But our [important cooking tip](#) is to add in a raw potato to soak up the salty flavors and revive the original taste for a successful meal. With this in mind, you can enjoy your curry and reap the health benefits it has.

SAMPLE #2

Canadian Vision Health Is Getting Worse: Here's Why

A report from the Canadian Council of the Blind and Fighting Blindness Canada recently revealed that eye health in the country is dipping at alarming rates. More than 1.2 million Canadians live with vision loss, while over eight million experience one of the four major diseases such as glaucoma, retinal diseases, cataracts and macular degeneration.

Most residents believe that this is caused by advanced age, when the reality is that these eye issues are present across all ages. Additionally, a Yahoo! Finance [article on Canada's vision care](#) revealed that the government has already spent \$15.6 billion for its residents, but the current decline in vision health is expected to cost \$56 billion by 2050. Considering that good vision is essential to overall wellness, it's important to understand why Canada is seeing these patterns in regards to vision health.

Most Canadians neglect eye exams

Getting a comprehensive eye exam from an optometrist or ophthalmologist is important in maintaining vision, since they can assess the health of the eyes and determine any pressing conditions that need immediate treatment. Unfortunately, a Clearly [report called Eyes on Canada: Are Canadians taking care of their vision?](#) revealed that around 34% of Canadians are overdue for an eye exam. Adults are recommended to schedule an eye exam once every 24 months to stay on top of their eye health, but children need one each year.

However, [a Cult MTL feature on health inequity](#) within Canada revealed that some communities have difficulty accessing basic healthcare, including routine eye exams. Not being able to get eye exams can exacerbate the development of conditions such as vision errors, glaucoma, retinal diseases, and other diagnoses that require medical attention. As such, it is important that the Canadian government distribute health funds accordingly to address the eye problems encountered by its diverse population, especially the disadvantaged communities.

People spend longer time looking at a screen

As school, work, and recreational activities can all be done through online means, there has been a growing reliance on using devices for long periods of time. Students depend on their devices to access online learning tools, while some adults conduct all of their workload in front of a computer screen for the entire day. Additionally, the internet and technology has made socializing easier through the use of personal devices, which is why most people find it easier to stay glued to a screen.

While taking time away from devices can be helpful, some people are required to stay online for long hours at a time to complete their daily tasks. To address this, some people use blue light glasses, as [mentioned on a post from Medical News Today](#). These are glasses that have

filters to block out the harsh light emitted by screens, reducing the risk of eye strain, symptoms of dry eyes, and other discomforts that can affect eye health.

Climate change is affecting eye health

Climate change is a pressing topic lately, since it is greatly affecting the environment and people all over the globe. However, an effect of climate change that gets ignored is the threat it poses to eye health. To illustrate, climate change causes higher ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun, and prolonged exposure to this can lead to light sensitivity, cataract formation, blurry vision, and cancers of the eyelid. This is especially pressing for Canadians, as the country is subjected to extreme UV levels.

Additionally, [CTV News published information](#) on the link between higher temperatures and vision impairment for adults in advanced age. Climate change is the leading cause for rising temperature rates across the globe and this can make older adults more vulnerable to declining vision. As such, it is important that Canadians wear appropriate eyewear such as UV-blocking sunglasses to reduce exposure to UV rays and lessen the risk of rapid vision deterioration.

SAMPLE #3

Dissecting Plus-Size Representation in Film

Media, including the film industry, is recognized in having a powerful role in shaping social attitudes and beliefs. Regardless of the genre, films are works that can influence public opinion and change attitudes in its portrayal of different narratives and characters. Since the world is made up of diverse sets of people, it is important that films give voice to different stories and help people feel seen. Unfortunately, film is notoriously lackluster in this regard.

Up until a few years ago, actors who did not fit traditional standards were rarely featured in the silver screen. Even if they were chosen to be part of the cast, actors with unconventional features were often portrayed as jokes, sidekicks, or victims. This trend is slowly changing, though, as different forms of on-screen representation can be observed. There are now films that [celebrate neurodiversity](#), shed positive light on LGBTQ identities, and make ample space for cultural stories. That said, there is still a long way to go in terms of fair representation, especially for plus-size individuals.

History of plus-size representation in film

Since film is a medium that can mirror our reality, it is capable of capturing some of the harsh societal norms reflected in society. One such norm is concerned with physical appearance and the rigid beauty standards for people transfers over to film, where there is a noticeable lack of body diversity. For the most part, this is due to a bias against plus-sized bodies and a subconscious [form of fatphobia](#).

A lot of cultures associate higher weight with physical and mental inferiority, often believing that plus-sized individuals do not care enough about their health to introduce change. As a result, many plus-size characters who manage to be included in a film do not usually star in the lead role. They are often designated as “funny” characters that use their weight as a crutch for jokes and comedic relief. However, more films have become size inclusive in recent years and there are now several observations of this representation in film.

Negative portrayals of plus-sized bodies

Often, films only include “fat” characters to subject them to a body transformation which can guarantee their happy ending. They can also be portrayed as “gross” or helpless because of their appearance, such as how Thor was portrayed in *Avengers: End Game* (2019) when he gained weight from his grief. This is harmful messaging within media, since it implies that plus-sized people can only find satisfaction in life if they conform to conventional beauty standards.

Furthermore, a lot of films misuse some words when discussing the appearance of plus-size characters. Characters are often insulted by being called fat, obese, or an overweight loser—terms that are used carelessly by scriptwriters. In addition to addressing this portrayal, it is also important to know the [difference between overweight and obesity](#), since the latter is

considered to be a medical diagnosis. Both terms mean that someone has an excess of body fat, but obesity is determined by a high body mass index (BMI) of 30 and above. It is also recognized as a chronic disease that can lead to other health issues and should be tackled with more grace if included in film.

Positive growth for body diversity and representation

While some films are unable to portray plus-sized characters properly, works like *Dumplin'* (2018) are helping to reimagine stories with representation. For one thing, it discusses the turbulence of being a plus-sized teenage girl, who is faced with a lot of societal pressure to change her appearance. The film does show its lead character having difficulty with her body, but redirects her story to focus on showing what self-acceptance means beyond physical appearance.

Additionally, *Hairspray* (2007) has a plus-sized main character who was unapologetic about taking up space and being herself. Not only that, but she broke stereotypes by being able to keep up with dance numbers without breaking a sweat and showed that plus-sized characters having fun does not warrant any comments directed about their body.

Currently, there aren't a lot of portrayals that include plus-size leads in recent films, and it would be good if the industry could add more. In line with this, some actors who play plus-size characters with happy endings are subjected to discrimination in real life, such as the [body shaming experience](#) of Nikki Blonsky while filming *Hairspray*. It is important that film be used as a tool to normalize body positivity, both on and off the screen.

SAMPLE #4

Don't Forget, Study Finds Smoking Shrinks The Brain and Impair Memory

Smoking has long been associated with serious health risks. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) emphasizes the [health effects of tobacco use](#) and using products like cigarettes, which contain a toxic mix of over 7,000 chemicals. Smoking weakens and harms nearly every organ in the body, while also increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease, risk of stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and type 2 diabetes.

In line with this, medical experts and researchers continue to follow the effects of smoking to further understand other ways it can impact health. Surprisingly, studies have found that smoking also has a huge adverse impact on brain health, as it affects brain volume and overall mental acuity.

Effects of smoking on the brain

One of the pressing effects of smoking on the brain is related to volume. Studies from the journal of Biological Psychiatry Global Open Science revealed that smoking is strongly associated with [decreased brain volume](#) and long-term smokers are at greater risk of their brains shrinking. People's brains naturally shrink with age, and is usually referred to as brain atrophy. This is due to reduced cell volume and degeneration of tissues, but consistent smoking can accelerate this process and lead to premature brain aging.

In line with this, having low brain volume also has its own health risks. According to the National Institutes of Health, an aged brain increases the possibility of stroke and can lead to problems with memory and performing everyday tasks. Furthermore, some studies also showed that brain atrophy from smoking [drives up risk for dementia](#), particularly Alzheimer's disease. As such, it's important to recognize these effects of smoking and find ways to help strengthen your brain health.

Ways to strengthen brain health

Switch to smoking alternatives

Quitting is the easiest way to curb the effects of cigarette use and there are alternatives that ease the process of smoking cessation. One popular smoking alternative are [nicotine pouches](#), as these are tobacco-free and do not contain the chemicals found in cigarettes. These pouches are also smokeless and you only need to place a pouch in between your gum and teeth to discreetly release the nicotine content. Additionally, these come in varying flavors and strengths to satisfy your cravings. Case in point, ZYN nicotine pouches are available in 3 and 6 mg and have a range of flavors like wintergreen, spearmint, and citrus to enhance your experience.

Alternatively, you can also opt for transdermal [nicotine patches](#) if you want something non-oral. These patches look similar to bandages and are placed on your skin to provide a

steady release of nicotine throughout the day. Nicotine patches also do not contain any tobacco and are discreet, especially when worn under clothes. Brands like Nicorette also have transparent nicotine patches for ultimate discretion and these are available in strengths up to 21 mg and leave your cravings satisfied for long hours.

Incorporate more physical activity

Besides ceasing the use of cigarettes, you can further support your brain health through physical activity. Exercise has been linked with many health benefits, but an article from CNBC shows that [neuroscientists encourage movement](#) to help the brain. Engaging in physical activity promotes the production of new brain cells and protects against accelerated aging.

This is helpful for smokers whose brains have been impacted by their use of cigarettes and can be a way for them to increase brain volume. Moreover, exercise also improves focus, concentration, and reaction times to promote mental agility and overall efficiency when doing everyday tasks.

Engage in brain healthy activities

In addition to moving your body, exercising your brain also strengthens your memory, attentiveness, and general mental acuity. Doing certain activities stimulates your brain and promotes its health, which also prevents conditions like dementia and treatment for psychiatric conditions such as obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

Healthline recommends activities like solving jigsaw puzzles, reading, listening to music, taking new routes, and verbalizing observations within your immediate environment to improve concentration and cognitive abilities. You can also try pursuing a new language, pick up a new skill through an instrument, and generally try to learn new things everyday to keep your brain active.