There are some unexpected benefits to shopping online. Local researchers have found that going to the internet for your groceries might not only save you money, but it might actually help you lose weight.

Tara Barros, of Old Saybrook, shops online for groceries regularly using Peapod. The service is convenient because food is just a click away and it helps her family eat healthier by avoiding crowded aisles and impulse buying.

"When you go to the store, especially like me at 6 or 7 o'clock at night after working all day, you're going buy M&Ms and crunch bars, and all sorts of things you shouldn't be buying. But with the Peapod, you can stick to your list," Barros said.

A study from UConn psychology professor Amy Gorin shows that services like Peapod are much more than a time saver. They can actually help people shed pounds.

"It decreased impulse purchases. They weren't swayed by the smells of the food or the sales that were happening at the store. They really stuck to their list," Gorin said.

During the eight-week study, 28 people participated in a weight-loss program. Half of them shopped on Peapod and the other half simply went to the store.

"We found by using the online service people were really able to cut back on the amount of high fat foods they had in their home. So, reduced it by up to 40 percent," she said. "We also found the more times people used the ordering service the better their weight losses were, so there was an association there."

Even though the service comes with a delivery fee for each order, Gorin said many customers still find themselves spending less overall. You can easily dump items from your cart online and that's not all.
"One of the most powerful things in shopping is just being exposed to products," Gorin said.

For now, with a busy schedule Barros will continue turning to the World Wide Web for her groceries.

"At 8 o'clock, when you get the munchies, it's not here to go right on your hips," Barros said.

Nov 4, 2009

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