

CAN THIS BE LOVE?

IS LOVE FATTENING? Sharing an address doesn't have to mean sharing a belt size

If the latest research is true, being married can be as fattening for a woman as being force-fed a steady diet of éclairs. One survey has it that wives of thirteen years put on an average of thirty-three pounds—which works out to a little over three ounces, or one and a half Snickers bars, per month.

This means that those of us who want full-time relationships, but who *don't* want to be mistaken for the Capitol dome, must be aware of how and why living with a man affects our diets. Herewith, a list of various ways live-in love can be fattening, along with strategies to help ensure that having the same address as a man doesn't mean having the same belt size as well.

Keeping food he likes in the house

When I lived alone, keenly aware that I had less willpower with sweets than luck with men, I made certain that cookies came into my home no more often than the painter. Then I moved in with my partner, who feels that a home without chocolate is like a home without oxygen. The result of this circumstance is evident to anyone standing behind me.

If the food your partner introduces into your home is almost as objectionable as the friends he introduces into it, then it's up to you to create a more congenial dietary atmosphere. For instance, suggest that he keep his Ring Dings at the office and store his beer snacks in the trunk of his car.

Sharing dinner every night

On my own, the success of my weight-control program depended heavily on omitting dinner every third or fourth night. This method of dieting became impractical once I started sharing my home with a guy who thinks that skipping dinner is as unmanly as skipping rope, and who feels that if he is going to eat alone he might just as well *live* alone.

If your partner is inconsiderate enough to want dinner every night, and selfish enough to want *you* to eat it with him, try introducing him to an alternative life-style. Suggest that evidence shows that partners who sometimes eat dinner separately make love more often than those who don't. Then, for his birthday, buy him a book of McDonald's gift certificates.

Cooking to prove yourself

Living alone, I would as willingly cook a meal as I would my own goose. After moving in

with my partner, however, I suddenly felt I had to become a combination saucier and pastry chef, to prove that I could feed him as well as had his old girlfriends, his mother and Uncle Sam. Unfortunately, cooking more usually means eating more, since refusing to consume the food I prepare tends to dampen my mate's confidence in my abilities.

If you find you are trying to prove yourself by emulating your partner's mother—last seen outside her kitchen sometime in the spring of 1984—try taking another route to his heart. For instance, instead of making him dinners, make him sweaters. Better still, write your autobiography and make him famous.

Adding his eating habits to yours

When I lived by myself I ate mostly junk. Now I live with someone who eats good food and I find that I, too, eat good food. However, I still eat junk. Adding my partner's eating habits to my own has proved as lethal to my weight as adding a refrigerator to my bedroom.

Perhaps you have a similar problem and are eating the refreshing salads you have always liked *plus* all the red meat your partner thinks is essential to having red blood. If so, try alternating his eating habits with yours. Tell your partner that if he eats a light meal with you one evening, then the next night he can stuff his face with steak until he says Moo.

Cooking as a joint activity

The notion of cooking for *fun* was as lunatic an idea as cleaning for kicks when I lived alone. Now, making dinner with my mate is a pleasurable activity; this means that I spend a lot more time handling food, and finding out how short a distance it is from my hands to my mouth.

If you think you and your partner spend too much time in the kitchen, talking with your mouths full, suggest non-food-related activities you can do together, like measuring one another's waistlines, or papering your walls with posters showing the Heimlich maneuver.

Living with a good cook

About one in every 5,000 women finds herself living with a man who loves to cook. This is my misfortune. I live with a man who not only cooks, but cooks well—which means that I often eat more than I need to maintain my ideal weight (unless my ideal weight were that of a small camel).

If your partner is a good cook, try to get him to turn his talents in another direction. For instance, you might suggest that he take up ceramics. Then, instead of baking bread, he could bake ashtrays.

Follow these suggestions and perhaps, when they take the next census, you and your partner *won't* add up to a three-person household.

by Bette-Jane Raphael