# The resurgence of the tapeworm diet: a troubling weight loss trend in the UK



Recent research has uncovered a concerning trend in the realm of weight loss techniques in the UK, with the tapeworm diet resurfacing as a method employed by some individuals. The study, conducted by ZAVA Online Doctor, revealed that approximately one in 25 Brits have attempted this extreme dieting approach, with men seemingly more inclined to use it; one in 20 men admitted to trying the diet.

The tapeworm diet involves the consumption of a pill containing a tapeworm egg, which, upon ingestion, hatches within the body. The underlying theory is that the parasite absorbs the calories consumed, purportedly facilitating weight loss without necessitating any alterations in diet or lifestyle. This method gained traction in the early 1900s, where individuals would swallow tape and ultimately take an anti-parasitic pill to eliminate the tapeworm once their desired weight was achieved.

Despite its historical appeal, the tapeworm diet is widely discredited and presents serious health risks. Common symptoms associated with tapeworm infections include diarrhoea and vomiting, and paradoxically, the presence of the parasite can even lead to increased appetite, further complicating weight management. More alarmingly, tapeworms can grow up to nine metres in length and have been associated with severe medical conditions such as meningitis, epilepsy, and dementia. Complications can arise during the expulsion of the parasite, potentially resulting in rectal issues if the anti-parasitic medication does not function effectively.

Dr Crystal Wyllie, a representative of ZAVA, highlighted the psychological aspects of eating habits. In her comments to the publication, she stated, "Whether triggered by your feelings, hormones or simply boredom, you can gain more control over your eating habits by understanding your cravings." She emphasised the importance of recognising emotional triggers for cravings and suggested that identifying patterns can aid individuals in making informed choices regarding their eating behaviours.

To assist those struggling with cravings, ZAVA Online Doctor has introduced the Cravings Calculator, a tool designed to analyse individual eating patterns and offer personalised insights aimed at fostering healthier dietary choices. The study also revealed that nearly a fifth of British respondents reported feeling pressured to lose weight by their partners, with 23% of men indicating they faced this pressure. In contrast, only 20% of the surveyed population attributed their weight loss pressures to social media influences.

The findings bring to light the lengths to which some individuals may go to alter their appearance and raise questions about the underlying motivations for this behaviour.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.healthline.com/health/diet-and-weight-loss/tapeworm-diet> - This URL supports the claim that the tapeworm diet involves consuming a pill with a tapeworm egg and highlights the serious health risks associated with this practice, including potential complications like blockages and neurological issues.
* <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001391.htm> - This URL provides information on tapeworm infections, which are relevant to understanding the risks of the tapeworm diet, including the potential for severe medical conditions if the parasite is not properly treated.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fad_diet> - This URL discusses fad diets, including the tapeworm diet, and explains why such diets are often discredited due to their lack of sustainability and potential health risks.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This URL is the source of the article discussing the tapeworm diet trend in the UK and the findings from ZAVA Online Doctor regarding its prevalence and associated risks.
* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK534845/> - This URL provides general information on parasitic infections, which can help understand the biological aspects of tapeworms and their impact on human health.
* <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/tapeworm/symptoms-causes/syc-20378174> - This URL offers detailed information on tapeworm infections, including symptoms and complications, which are relevant to understanding the risks associated with the tapeworm diet.