



side effects may include...

Simple solutions to eight diet nuisances

By Victoria Shanta Retelny, R.D. Photograph by Michael Lewis

You know who she is: that always-eager coworker who was sweet as pie last week but is suddenly having a hissy fit when you take the last Sharpie from the supply closet, nodding off in the 4 P.M. staff meeting, and making you want to hold your nose every time she exhales. Cut her some slack: She's just on a diet. And those side effects—crankiness, exhaustion, and bad breath, to name a few—can be as tough to deal with as the relentless cravings for peanut butter cheesecake. In the event that you're the one dieting, use these tips to ease your weight-loss woes. Trust us: You'll feel a whole lot better (and your friends and coworkers will too).

SIDE EFFECT NO. 1 **You can give Oscar the Grouch a run for his money**

Why it happens You're not eating enough carbs, or you're not eating them often enough. Carbohydrates supply energy to the entire body, but the brain is the only organ that is solely carb-dependent, says Felicia D. Stoler, R.D., an exercise physiologist in New York City. Carb consumption stimulates production of serotonin, the brain chemical that lifts your mood. So too few carbs can make you feel—and act—like Paris Hilton on a bad bikini day.

Slim solution Keep blood sugar levels (and your emotions) on an even keel by eating about every 3 hours. Scatter your carbs throughout the day rather than devouring them all in one shot. And choose ones that are high in fiber, like whole grains, fruits, and vegetables: They're released into the bloodstream more slowly than their refined cousins (white flour, sugar) and cause fewer peaks and valleys in blood sugar levels, says New York-based dietitian Marissa Lippert, R.D. See ya, Mallomar; hello, mango.

SIDE EFFECT NO. 2 **Your period is all screwy**

Why it happens Dietary fat is one of the building blocks of estrogen production. So if you eat too little of it, your estrogen levels may drop—and your period may get delayed, or you may skip it altogether. Simply put: "Fat is necessary for menstruation to happen," says Faye Berger Mitchell, R.D., a dietitian in Bethesda, Maryland. Not only are wacky periods bad for your bod, they're clearly a problem if you want to get pregnant.

Slim solution Chew some fat, for heaven's sake! "The specific amount of fat needed differs from woman to woman," Berger Mitchell says. But if your cycle is out of whack, you