

# WHAT'S MAKING YOUR STOMACH FAT?

Chewing gum! Swigging soda! Staying up late!

Diet and fitness pros reveal the everyday habits that can sabotage a sexy midsection BY ERICKA SÓUTER



Union cuts out cocktails. "They have a lot of calories!" she tells *Us*.

**E**VEN WITH PERSONAL CHEFS and trainers at their disposal, celebrities aren't immune to belly bulge. "I have to work out really hard so my stomach won't stick out," **Fergie** tells *Us*. But hitting the gym isn't enough, as experts reveal here.

## POOR FOOD CHOICES

Salt-heavy and starchy foods bring on bloat fast. Instead, opt for water-based fruits and veggies, seafood high in omega-3 fatty acids and whole grains like millet. "But more importantly, it's portion size," says A.J. Johnson, who has trained **Gabrielle Union**. "Excess food becomes weight gain."

## TOO LITTLE SLEEP

"Sleep produces hormones that help the body burn fat more effectively," says celeb nutritionist Oz Garcia. Anything short of eight hours, the metabolism gets out of whack.

## STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

Added stress increases cortisol levels, a hormone that traps fat around the midsection. "Try aerobic exercise three times a week or more," says Dr. David Heber, director of the UCLA Center for Human Nutrition. "It's a stress reducer."

## SODA

"I cut out soda and it dropped pounds really fast," *Dancing With the Stars'* **Lacey Schwimmer** tells *Us*. And it's not just regular soda that's to blame. Some studies show that the artificial sweeteners in diet

soda (and candy and gum) cause the body to secrete insulin, says Garcia, which increases your appetite and makes you gain weight.

## Foods to Eat



halibut, salmon, tuna, brown rice, quinoa, fresh veggies, whole-grain breads, berries, citrus fruit, pecans, cashews



## Foods to Avoid

high-fructose drinks, potatoes, burgers, pizza, refined grains (like white rice, bread and pasta)



## DOING CRUNCHES INCORRECTLY

Get tips from a trainer on doing abs moves correctly, or "constantly contract your core by pulling your belly button toward your back," advises Johnson. "You can do this sitting in traffic or at your desk."

## CHEWING GUM

"Substitute gum-chewing for eating a snack, and you can save calories," says Heber. But Garcia warns, "Chewing and not actually eating triggers hunger for many people."

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