

## Junk Food: Not Just Monkeys' Business

Since the days of [Darwin](#), scientists have **reminded** us **of** how closely related we are to our **primate** cousins. Yet in addition to a common ancestor, researchers have discovered that we share something else. After a tough day at work, both humans and [apes](#) have a weakness for junk food.

While observing a community of female monkeys, American scientists noted that high-**status** monkeys ate slightly more than those with lower status, but that changed once a delicious new meal was introduced. Immediately after researchers began providing fatty banana-flavored **pellets**, the low-status monkeys started **pigging out**. In fact, they began eating much more than their social **superiors**. Researchers believe this happened because fatty foods reduce the release of stress hormones. Thus, the **stressed-out** low-status monkeys felt more relaxed after eating them.

The results **correspond to** the findings of another study performed on British **civil servants**. In England, despite having a **satisfactory** salary and good health care, low-ranking workers were found to be more **obese** than their superiors.

These studies suggest that a high-calorie diet may actually be a natural response to difficult social settings. So if you are thinking about going on a diet, maybe you should focus on getting a promotion instead!

*–By Jamie Blackler*

**pig out:** to eat greedily

**civil servant:** a person employed in the civil service