15 Darn Things Keeping You FAT

ROOT CAUSE
WELLNESS CENTER

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INTRODUCTION

Hello, I'm Narges Feizabadi, a Functional Medicine Practitioner.

Life can be a whirlwind – juggling work, family, and finding those precious moments for self-care. I get it; I've been there too. Amidst the chaos, taking control of your health often takes a backseat. But what if I told you that it doesn't have to be this way?

I understand the struggle because I've walked that path.

Exercise between meetings, nutritious meals squeezed into busy schedules, it's a real challenge. But here's the thing: You're not alone.

I'm here to guide you through the journey of weight loss, to help you find sustainable solutions that fit into your life. It's not about quick fixes; it's about creating lasting changes that work for you and getting to the root cause of what's interfering with your weight loss.

Let's make YOU a priority.

Say goodbye to generic solutions. At Root Cause Wellness Center, we embrace an approach to weight loss that is both personalized and integrative. Our focus is on pinpointing and addressing the root causes that hinder your progress, empowering you to attain lasting results.

SPECIAL OFFER

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Metabolism Slowing/ Fad Diets/ Calorie Restriction

Calorie in/Calorie out model is NOT accurate. Metabolic rates between individuals can be drastically different.

Better assessment is to look at INSULIN REACTION to that calorie

- Low carb diet burned 300 more calories per day even though total cal consumption higher (JAMA)
- Biggest Loser research demonstrates that the metabolism of the participants never recovered (hormonal changes in response to weight loss)--"body puts multiple mechanisms in place to get you back to your weight..."

We get HUNGRIER BECAUSE WE ARE FATTER

- There is an abundance of fat cells in the tissue and not in the bloodstream, the body gets hungry to signal increase intake [abundance of calories but in the wrong place. We have to train the body to burn fat as fuel vs carbs]

Digestive Disorders

Many digestive disorders such as, Candida (yeast overgrowth), SIBO (bacterial overgrowth), IBS, Leaky Gut (intestinal hyperpermeability) and more cause bloating which not only is painful but can add up to 10 lbs of belly expansion

Inflammation can create temporary that leads to lasting weight gain

A few digestive disorders can lead to excessive weight loss however the vast majority lead to weight gain

Dysbiosis that includes a higher Firmicutes to Bacteroidetes bacterial ratio can lead to “insulin resistance, increased caloric extraction from food and lipogenesis” - yes, certain strains of bacteria in the gut can contribute to weight gain.

Chemicals that cause Weight Gain

Man-made chemicals in our environment that disrupt the endocrine (hormone) system even at very minuscule amounts. This is current "news" yet known in pharmaceutical companies for 25 years

Persistent organic pollutants (including DDT, hexachlorobenzene, and fire-retardants) - elevated levels of POPs mean 38x more likely to be insulin resistant.
(Making lifestyle changes to avoid plastics, better cookware, and personal products is not being "picky" "difficult" or even "sensitive' - it is being smart!

Organochlorines- disrupt weight-controlling hormones such as thyroid, estrogens, insulin, leptin, and more (ex. solvents, pesticides, etc)

Phthalates- metabolic disruptor (personal care products, coating of Rx meds, jelly rubber, children's toys/clay, wrappers...especially as age/breakdown expose more)

BPA alters fxn of over 200 genes, neuro damage/cancer/thyroid dysfunction, in metal food/drink cans, food in plastic packages, pet food, leaches from containers, and credit card receipts (clears from the body in 3 days but we have continuous exposure)

HELPFUL TIPS:

- Eat only organic FATS & meats
- Ideally organic produce, but at least wash to try to remove some pesticide residues
- Avoid the microwave and only heat in glass
- Use cookware that doesn't leach chemicals such as glass, porcelain/ceramic or stainless steel (cast iron in some cases and be sure to rotate to avoid iron overload) - avoid non-stick
- Drink out of glass containers

Leptin Resistance

Leptin is easily measured through blood labs, inexpensive and often a missing piece in why people struggle with weight loss or sustaining weight loss

Leptin is a protein hormone produced by fat cells, normally acts on the brain to lower food intake (“we have enough”) and increase activity (“we have energy”)

With Leptin resistance, the body is fat but the brain can’t see it and it feels starved

Losing weight reduces Leptin so the body tries to eat more and gain it back (set points). THIS IS WHY YOU GAIN MORE WEIGHT AFTER LOSING

This natural negative feedback loop in our body is designed to work like this: We eat then body fat goes up, then Leptin goes up so we eat less and burn more - OR - We don’t eat, body fat goes down, then Leptin goes down so we eat more and burn less

Major evolutionary role of leptin is to “respond to and defend against reductions of body fat” Trends in Endocrinology & Metab 2010

Some causes of Leptin resistance:

- High Leptin in the bloodstream (you are fat so you stay fat or get more fat - a cycle that must break biochemically to create change) Inflammation
- Diet high in sugar/starch
- Stress, Endocrine dysregulation Lack of sleep

Helpful Tips:

- Losing weight is the best way to lower leptin, but it is also fighting that process
- Sometimes a “metabolic shift” is in order - ask Healthy Healing what we recommend (15-min free consult)
- 7-keto supplement may help

Antibiotics & Gut Flora

Antibiotic (Ab) feed in animals flip a “switch” in young animals helping them pack on the pounds (making more money for cattle ranchers)

Those antibiotics are in our food supply, plus our own over-Rx (Ab during pregnancy increases child obesity risk)

Research shows that Ab contribution to weight gain stronger as you age
Ab change the microbiome

Different gut microbiota between the obese/non-obese

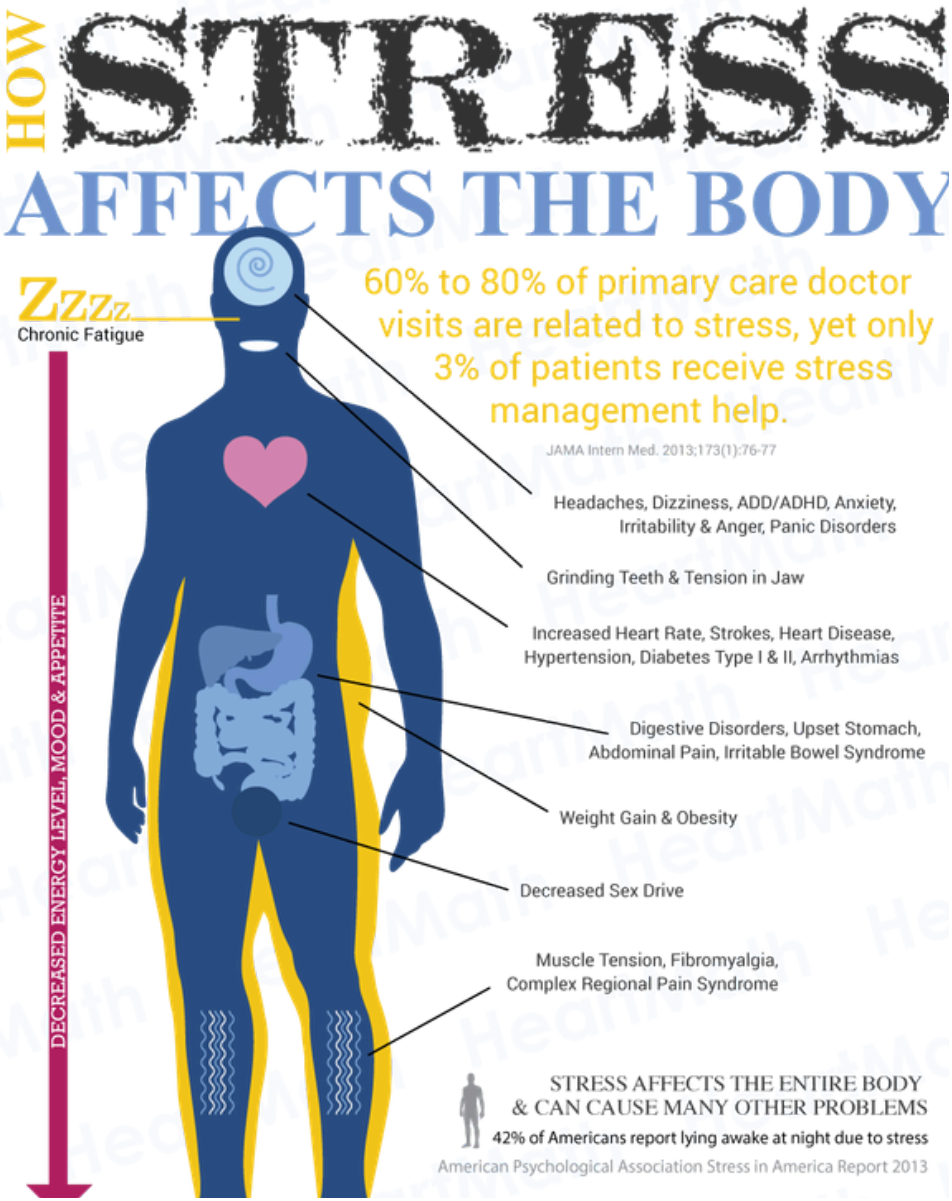
Inherit gut flora from mom during vaginal birth and then environmental exposure after

Probiotics don’t increase your “home team” but often do help as they move through

Proper pH of gut - must have a high acid tummy (that means low pH)

Ab can permanently wipe out strains of gut bacteria (fecal implants)

Stress


HOW STRESS AFFECTS THE BODY
ZZZz
Chronic Fatigue
DECREASED ENERGY LEVEL, MOOD & APPETITE
60% to 80% of primary care doctor visits are related to stress, yet only 3% of patients receive stress management help.
JAMA Intern Med. 2013;173(1):76-77
Headaches, Dizziness, ADD/ADHD, Anxiety, Irritability & Anger, Panic Disorders
Grinding Teeth & Tension in Jaw
Increased Heart Rate, Strokes, Heart Disease, Hypertension, Diabetes Type I & II, Arrhythmias
Digestive Disorders, Upset Stomach, Abdominal Pain, Irritable Bowel Syndrome
Weight Gain & Obesity
Decreased Sex Drive
Muscle Tension, Fibromyalgia, Complex Regional Pain Syndrome
STRESS AFFECTS THE ENTIRE BODY & CAN CAUSE MANY OTHER PROBLEMS
42% of Americans report lying awake at night due to stress
American Psychological Association Stress in America Report 2013

Stress

- Stress increases glucose in the bloodstream thereby increasing insulin Interferes with thyroid function
- Contributes to leaky gut, inflammation & food intolerances
- Damages pituitary, impacting the endocrine system

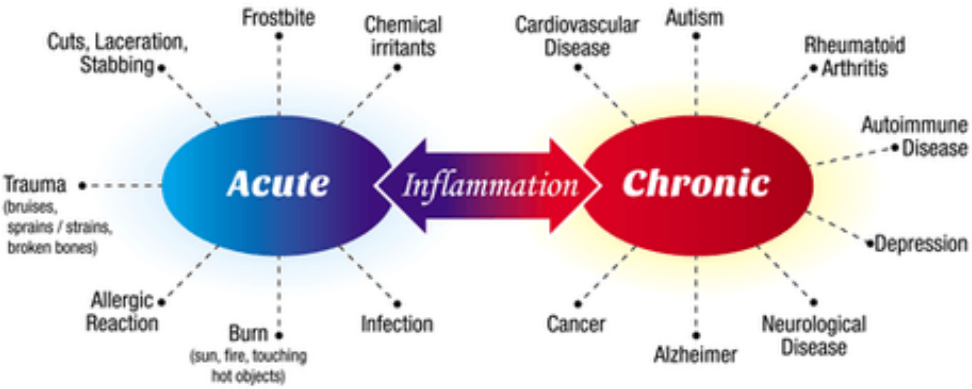
Body ONLY loses weight if it feels SAFE

Medications that cause Weight Gain

Biggest offenders:

- Antidepressants (SSRI, anti-psych, tricyclics, MAOIs)
- Birth control
- Prednisone
- Cholesterol Lowering Drugs (Statins)
- Antibiotics
- Acid-Suppressing Drugs
- Anti-Hypertensives

Inflammation



Can see in blood markers, patient experience, waist circumference

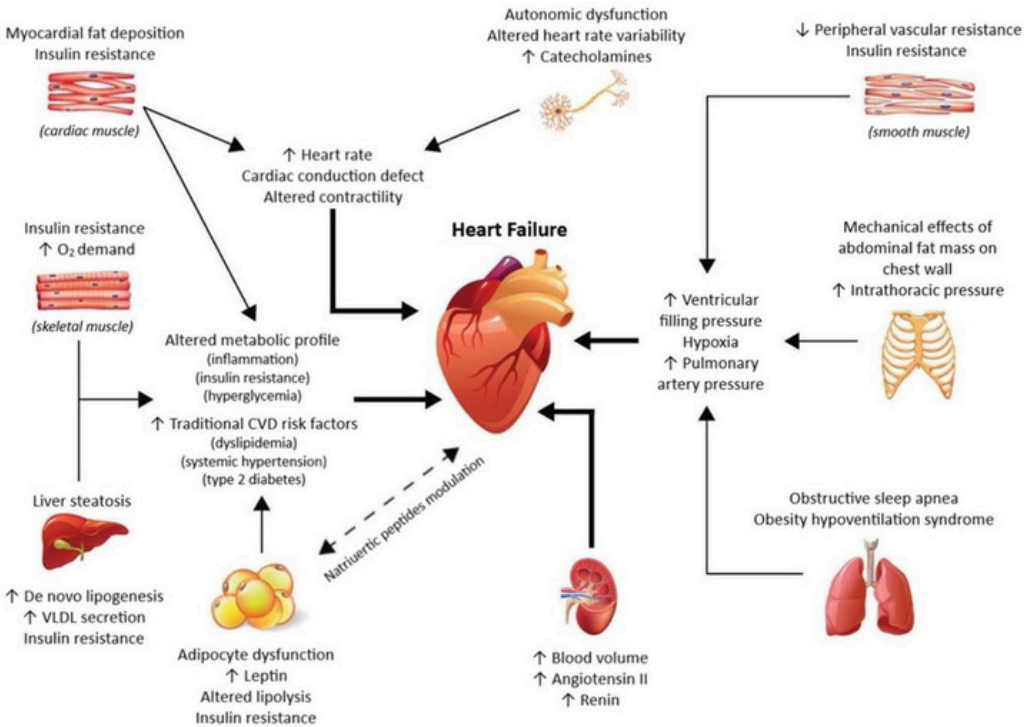
Correlates with systemic inflammation - Insulin can create inflammation

Immune cells mistake fatty deposits for “intruders”, body attacks, fat cells break open, macrophages mobilize clean up, release inflammatory IL-6 and TNF-alpha, WBC release cytokines

“High Insulin, one of the most profound and pervasive health issues, is rarely discussed by doctors or the media. We hear a great deal about the obesity epidemic, but it’s insulin dysregulation, also known as metabolic syndrome, that is behind it."

Long before you develop high blood sugar (pre-diabetes or diabetes) your insulin goes up to try to keep the sugar in the normal range.

Inflammation



The problem is that the high blood insulin level is inflammatory.

The high insulin stimulates the chemistry in our body that makes pro-inflammatory chemicals called cytokines.

Not only does it cause our bodies to hurt and to hold on to weight, but more importantly, this inflammation at a cellular level is a major driver in the development of all the major diseases of the modern world: heart disease, cancer, arthritis autoimmune diseases, and dementia. Inflammation contributes to the onset of thesediseases and inflammation also speeds theirprogression." - Ann Hathaway, MD

Sugar & Simple Carbohydrates

Insulin in the bloodstream, can NOT lose weight (insulin is the biochemical that puts fuel/sugar INTO the cells, if excess, sugar converts to fat - if there is no insulin, the body signals to convert fat into fuel - lose weight)

Sugar = blood glucose, Insulin the boat (and then the key), Insulin resistance (knock at the door, won't open)

Diabetes - is associated with obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and depression.

- shorten lifespan by about 4 to 23 years depending on age, sex, and ethnicity.
- -68% of deaths among seniors with diabetes are due to heart disease/16% stroke
- total cost of diabetes in the US, including medical expenses and lost productivity, was $299.3 billion in 2010
- approximately 77% of seniors had either diabetes or pre-diabetes in 2010
- Alzheimer's Disease now referred to as "Type 3 Diabetes"

Sugar & Simple Carbohydrates

Sugar - avg intake yearly 4 lbs in the 1940s (war rations), now 116 lbs

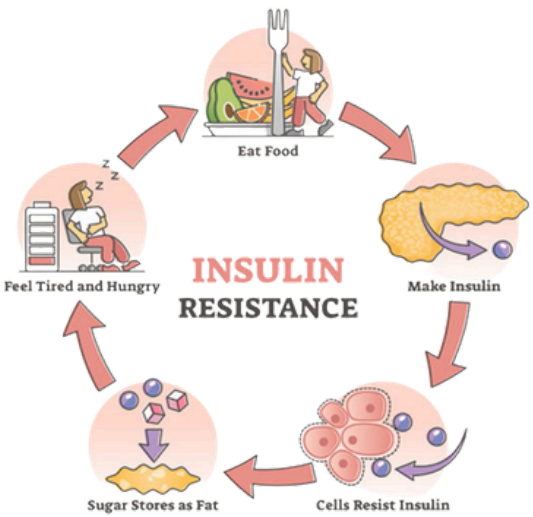
Carb-dense foods:

- Bread, cereal, granola, bran, snack/breakfast bars, oatmeal, baked goods, pastries, cookies
- Pasta, cakes, rice, potatoes, sweet potatoes, beans, corn, popcorn Fruit, fruit juices, smoothies, sodas, energy drinks, HFCS, Agave, Beer, Wine, Milk, and dairy products

Fructose

- Fruit sugar = turns into fat faster than any other sugar Large amounts damage the liver (very similar to alcohol) White sugar is half fructose/half glucose
- HFCS is 55% fructose/45% glucose
- Agave is 90%fructose/10% glucose - but “low glycemic”!
- Honey is 38% fructose/31% glucose +maltose/sucrose

What is Insulin Resistance?



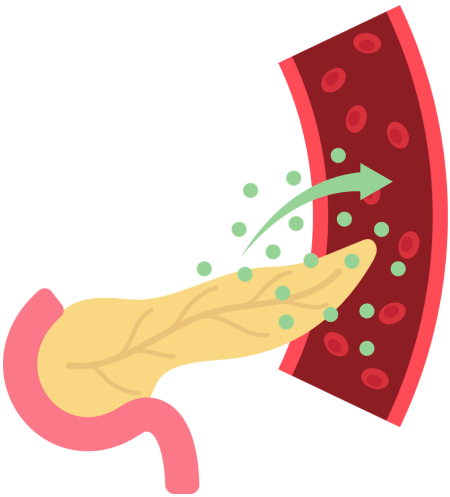
BEST SWEETENER choices:

- Honey & Dark Maple Syrup are natural and can be used in very limited amounts
- IF focusing on weight loss or diabetic or struggling to balance blood sugar or want to be "fat-burning" - then BEST to skip all sugar AND possibly fruit (while healing, or 1-2 servings per day), use liquid Whole Leaf Stevia or Monk Fruit (both do not spike insulin)
- BEST BET - get dessert from shakes, satisfy tastes with fat/protein

Impacts of High Blood Sugar:

- Women with thin hair (male pattern bald/insulin resist)
- PCOS
- Cancer (glucose feeds certain cancers)
- Alzheimer's Disease
- Depression
- Sleep Apnea
- Reduced immunity (BS over 120 drops WBC function 75% for days and increases inflammation - that's why Fall/Winter is "cold/flu season" - look at sugar consumed!)
- Hypothyroidism
- Fatty Liver disease
- Makes you look older (insulin highly inflammatory chemical in body)

What is Insulin Resistance?

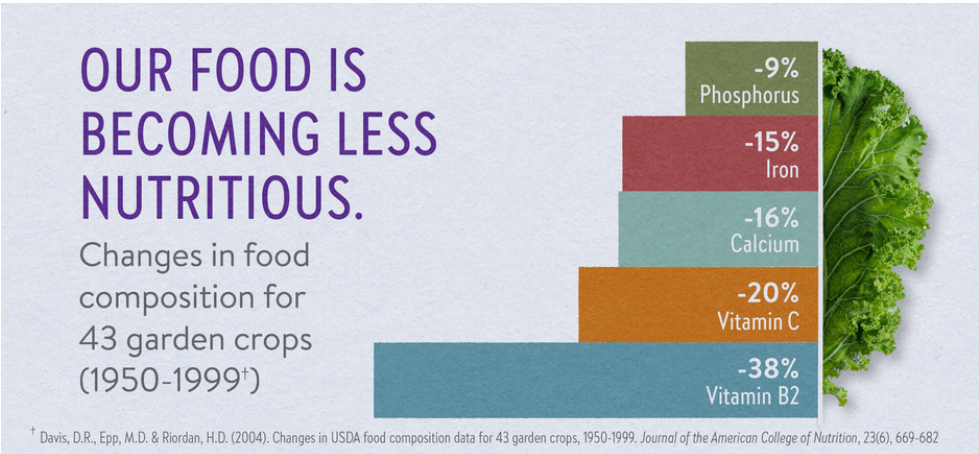


You can TRAIN your body to use fat/protein as fuel

Basics to stop triggering Insulin:

- Eat FYS ("Feed Your Soul") eating plan
- Lower carbs until cravings and fatigue are gone (often 60g or less) Eat every 3-4 hours to balance blood sugar (Once balanced, push to 4-5 hrs)
- Increase healthy dietary fat
- Exercise
- Don't skip meals, especially breakfast
- If moving into a fat-burning mode for energy, carbs will be even lower and go longer without needing to eat
- Test and track with food apps
- For health & to avoid diabetes, keep carbs less than 72g per day
- Monitor fasting glucose and A1C
- Keep postprandial glucose under 140 (or lower!)
- Supplement as needed w/Zn, Mg, Chromium, Gymnema, Cod Liver Oil/Omega 3

Modern Food Industry



Note the impact of the food industry, farming, pesticides, the body's evolution, lifestyle & environmental stressors. Our bodies have evolved very little but our world has dramatically changed.

FOOD DEGRADATION - The food industry, chemicals, pesticides, preservatives, processed foods, changes in farming & required shelf life has completely altered our food supply and thusly OUR BODIES (we are what we eat) and OUR HEALTH.

Great-grandparents ate 131 lbs of homegrown veggies vs 11 lbs today/year
Vit C in spinach is only half of what it was 50 years ago; "Today you'd have to eat 75 bowls of spinach to get the same amount of iron that one bowl might have given you back in '48"

Note the impact of the food industry, farming, pesticides, the body's evolution, lifestyle & environmental stressors. Our bodies have evolved very little but our world has dramatically changed.

Modern Food Industry

Dairy, Eggs & Meat

- Factory-farmed animals/products
- 100 years ago raised your own or delivered milk to you locally, or meat & poultry from local butcher
- Antibiotics, growth hormones & GMO feed (genetically modified) NEVER given to animals
- Everything was naturally “organic” & pasture-raised
- Now, billions of animals are raised in factory farms under terrible conditions
- Unsanitary, fed chemicals
- Eat organic, grass-fed, grass-finished & ideally local if possible

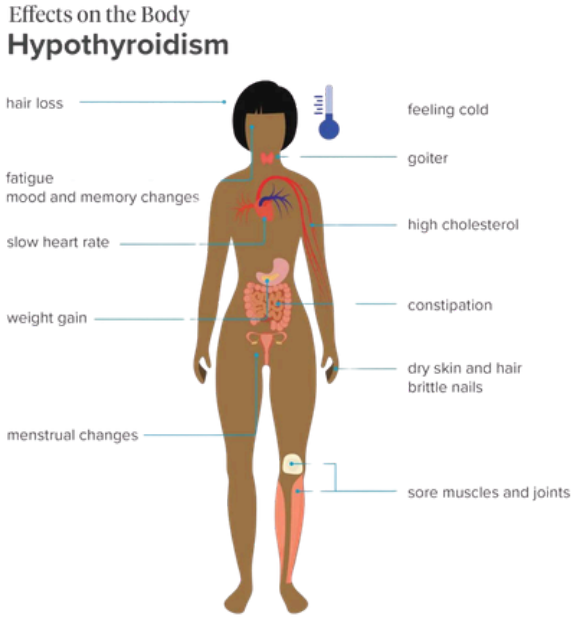
Veggies & Fruits

- Current modern-day produce has far fewer vitamins/minerals than 50-100 years ago
- Damaged from chemical fertilizers, pesticides & GMO’s
- Even organic farms are dealing with depleted soil
- Best choices are to eat organic, shop farmer’s markets, grow your own or use ewg.org list of dirty dozen and clean 15 for conventional produce

Processed Foods

- Anything in a package is processed
- Fast food, shortcuts/convenience rob us of nutrients at best & directly poison us at worst
- Highly GMO, full of artificial flavors (chemicals), sweeteners, trans fat Packaged in endocrine-disruption and anti-environmental plastics Shelf-life (demand of farm to factory to distributor to store) completely changes our food into anti-nutrient fillers
- Best choice - only junk food you should eat is what you make - use recipes for desserts

Hormones & Thyroid



Once T3 blood level is reduced to 30%, tissue levels are often decreased 70-80%

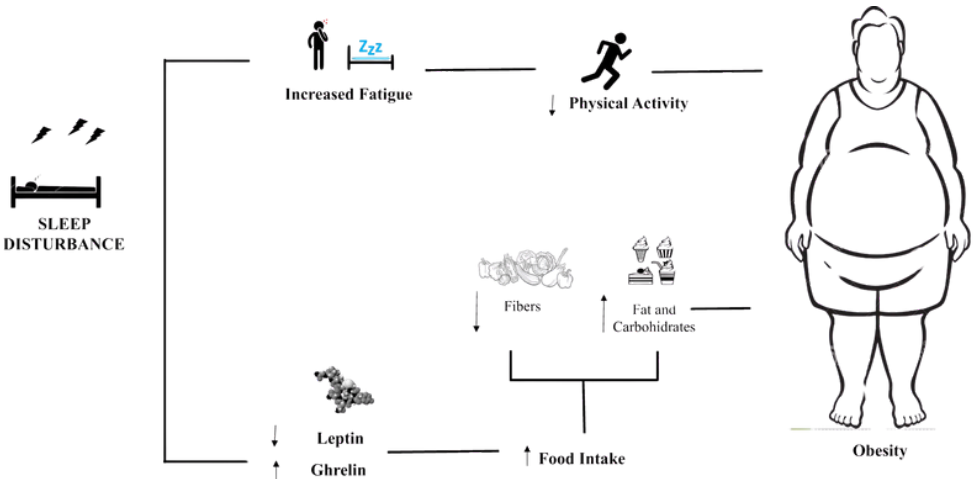
Hypothyroidism causes weight gain

Hypothyroidism can be caused by:

- High cortisol (suppresses pituitary gland & the conversion of T4-T3, dampens receptors)
- High estrogens (compete w/thyroid-binding globulin)
- Nutritional deficiencies (Selenium, Iodine, Vit A, Fe, Zn, Vit F)
- Toxic competing halogens (Br, Fl, Cl) for I receptors
- Liver Dysfunction (converts 60% of T4 to T3)
- Inflammatory Gut conditions
- Acute/Chronic dieting (turns on protective mechanism against losing weight)
- Stress

Note: Diabetics often only 45% conversion of T4 to T3, supplemental T3 may reduce cardiac risk

Sleep



Can be a lack of sleep, going to bed too late, sleep apnea, etc. Affects how the body repairs itself

The timing of sleep, as well as the number of hours, are important

Sleep is ESSENTIAL!! Scientists used to not know why we slept but did know that for some reason we went “crazy” if sleep-deprived. Not being allowed to sleep is literally a form of torture.

NOW we know one of the reasons sleep is so needed is due to the GLYMPHATIC SYSTEM - a functional waste clearance pathway for the central nervous system.

Think of it as a major detoxifier for our brain that works best while we sleep. A good night's rest of deep sleep is a must to achieve health & healing.

Sleep Tips:

#1 Schedule Sleep like you are in an Army Bootcamp for the first month

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day and stick to this on weekends in order to reset your "internal clock"

#2 NO caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, and other stimulants that keep you up

- Avoid caffeine (found in coffee, tea, chocolate, colas, and some pain relievers) for 4-6 hours before bedtime along with sports drinks, tobacco & sometimes stimulating activities. You need to WIND DOWN in the evening...

#3 DITCH SCREENS before bed (TV, laptop, and PHONE)

- Don't use electronics in the bedroom so you don't associate bed with work or "wakefulness" - save the bedroom for sleep and whoopee.
- If using at night is unavoidable, wear "blue light" glasses and/or keep your phone on the night display. Blue light significantly reduces your body's melatonin production, the sleep hormone.

#4 Create a sleep oasis

- Temperature if better cold to promote good sleep - between 60 & 75°F—and the room well ventilated.
- If your pets awaken you, consider keeping them outside the bedroom.
- Lower the volume of outside noise with earplugs or a "white noise" appliance.
- Use heavy curtains, blackout shades, or an eye mask to block light. And make sure your bedroom has a comfortable mattress and pillows (ideally natural).

#5 Exercise regularly

- Exercise before 3 pm every day. Exercise promotes continuous sleep.

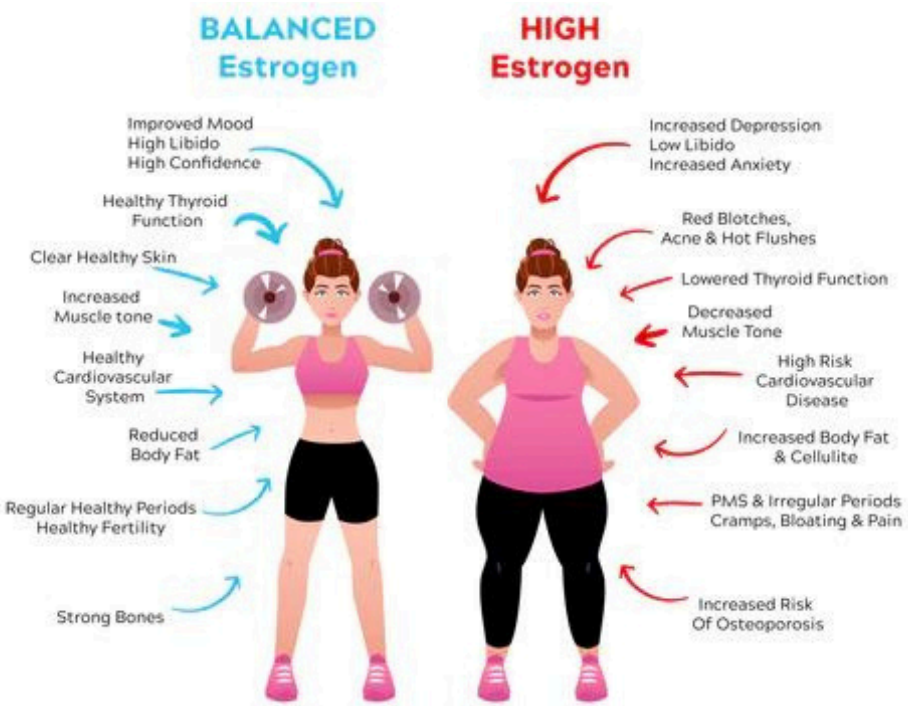
#6 Create an evening WIND DOWN ritual

- Light reading, a bath, relaxation exercises, or meditation to prepare for sleep.
- Avoid stressful, stimulating activities—such as work, digging up emotional wounds, arguments, and checking bank balances - write down your concerns and then let them go - they will be waiting the next day. You don't want to stimulate Cortisol.
- For those with high cortisol levels at night, we often use Phosphatidylserine.

#7 Eat a protein/fat-based snack in the evening

- This will help stabilize your blood sugar as you sleep. Once blood sugar balancing is under control consider not eating for hours before bedtime.

Estrogen Dominance



It's more appropriate to call this an imbalance of estrogen to progesterone and even more accurate to describe this a dysfunction of the Endocrine System (see those notes for more information)

Symptoms:

- Decreased sex drive Headaches
- Mood swings
- Weight gain-fat at belly or hips Irregular menses
- Bloating
- Breast swelling/fibrocystic Cold hand/feet (thyroid dysfxn) Hair loss
- Foggy thinking
- Insomnia
- PMS
- Peach fuzz
- Anxiety

Estrogen Dominance

The excess estrogen is caused by diet, environmental, and lifestyle factors.
Typical causes:

- Diet - high in carbs, low-fiber, low fats
- Stress - see adrenal notes
- Obesity - body fat over 28% (fat also produces estrogen) Liver congestion - needs to clear estrogen Environmental - hormones/food supply

Be wary of just adding progesterone to
"balance" it out, only needed in a small number of cases - see taking exogenous hormone notes

Natural ways to address includes via FYS or keto eating (or any meal plan that works for your body to shed weight and lower blood sugar), making sure you are supporting the METABOLISM and CLEARANCE of estrogen which often is ignored. We use the DUTCH test to assess Phase I and II detoxification and support 2-OH metabolism and methylation. Gut bacteria can also interfere with estrogen metabolism via b-glucuronidase. Note: if metabolized down the 4-OH pathway that is an increased risk of damage to DNA.

Trauma

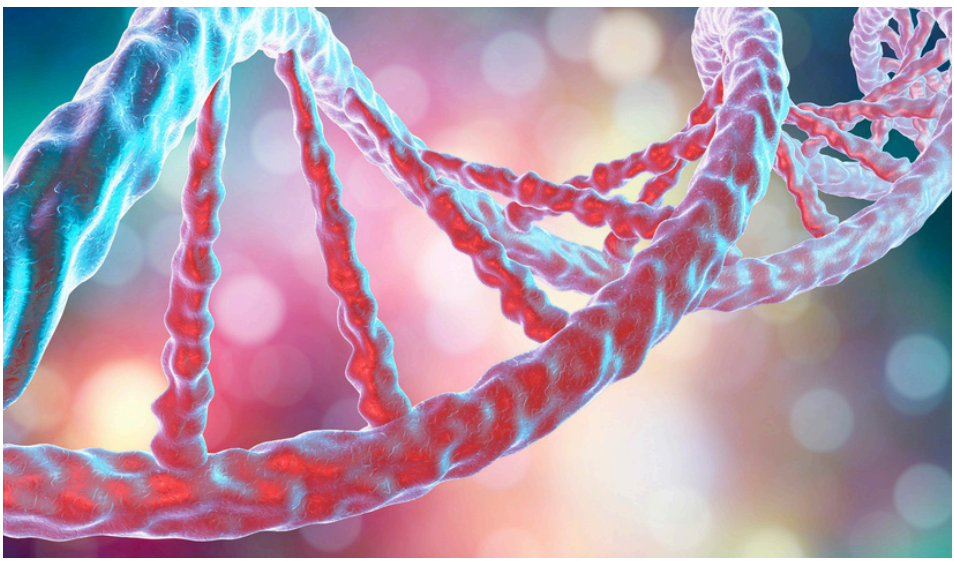
Manifests in many ways. Physical symptoms may include: tense, high heart rate, spasmodic muscles, less fluid exchange, difficulty sleeping, high cortisol, and brain wired differently (PTSD)

Victims of sexual abuse may want to gain weight as an attempt to ward off unwanted attention

The ACE Study found that adverse childhood experiences are a major risk factor of illness, disability and death in the US (including obesity).

YES, we need to eat well and restore health - but rarely is it complete without handling those childhood traumas.There are things that one might think they are "done with", yet they leave energetic signatures, tension in the body, habitual behaviors, and subtle forms of sabotage that inhibit your success.

Epigenetics/Genetics



EPIGENETICS - CHANGES CAUSED BY MODIFICATION OF GENE "EXPRESSION" RATHER THAN ALTERATION OF GENE ITSELF (think light switches with on/off)

- Can be brief (seconds) or multi-generational (ex. Prenatal exposure to famine in Netherlands & China increased schizophrenia, starvation in grandmother cause leanness/obesity in kids/grandkids)
- Ex. Mom survive Holocaust - kid higher risk for PTSD, paternal Grandpa severely underfed before puberty - grandkid less likely to develop diabetes and more
- Link to an interesting article which contains links to some of the research: http://tinyurl.com/epigenetics2015
- RESEARCH CLEAR - poor maternal nutrition can PRIME a pre-diabetes phenotype - insulin resistance by very early stages in life - maternal diet critical determinant of premature T2D risk (now also clear links between maternal diet and cardio dx risk in humans)

Epigenetics/Genetics

GENETICS - 20-30% (some argue 70%) Ranking of what's most influenced by genes in order:

- Obesity/height
- Schizophrenia
- Diabetes T2
- Hypertension
- Alcoholism
- Heart Dx

SNPs (single nucleotide polymorphism) - variation at a specific position in the genome

Impacts:

- Food intake, satiety & hunger
- Cell regulation
- Metabolism & Adipogenesis
- Thermogenic Processes
- Cytokines (cell-signaling protein), Adipokines & Proteins

We continue to learn more about obesity and genetics, but even if the "deck is stacked against you" it is good to know what you are facing, but it is not an "end all be all" - there is much you can do to impact your overall health!

What To Do?

The most important is to get assessed and figure out what is going on. Once informed, then we can make a plan and create a customized plan. Below are some examples of how to assess.

1. Metabolism slowing/Fad diets/chronic calorie restriction

Assess: intake/history, full thyroid hormone blood panel, leptin, DUTCH urine test (estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, cortisol, and metabolism of sex hormones)

2. Digestive disorders

Assess: intake/history, GI MAP stool test (pathogens, bacteria, intestinal health), OATs urine test (yeast/fungus), SIBO breath test (bacterial overgrowth/bloating), Leaky Gut (Advanced Intestinal Barrier Assessment, histamine)

3. Chemicals that cause weight gain

Assess: intake/history, Total Toxic Burden blood test (heavy metals, environmental toxins, mycotoxins)

4. Leptin resistance

Assess: intake/history, Leptin blood test, sugar panel blood test (fasting insulin, c-peptide, adiponectin, glucose, HgbA1c)

5. Antibiotics & Gut Flora

Assess: intake/history, GI MAP stool test (pathogens, bacteria, intestinal health), OATs urine test (yeast/fungus)

What To Do?

6. Stress
Assess: intake/history, DUTCH urine test (estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, cortisol, and metabolism of sex hormones)
7. Medications that cause weight gain
Assess: intake/history, Total Toxic Burden blood test (heavy metals, environmental toxins, mycotoxins)
8. Inflammation
Assess: intake/history, inflammation blood markers (hs-CRP, homocysteine), calprotectine on GI MAP stool test
9. Sugar & Simple Carbohydrates
Assess: intake/history, Leptin blood test, sugar panel blood test (fasting insulin, c-peptide, adiponectin, glucose, HgbA1c)
10. Modern food industry
Assess: intake/history, Total Toxic Burden blood test (heavy metals, environmental toxins, mycotoxins)
11. Hormones & Thyroid
Assess: intake/history, full thyroid hormone blood panel, leptin, DUTCH urine test (estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, cortisol and metabolism of sex hormones)
12. Sleep
Assess: intake/history, melatonin levels via DUTCH urine test (estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, cortisol and metabolism of sex hormones), sleep study if needed
13. Estrogen dominance
Assess: intake/history, DUTCH urine test (estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, cortisol and metabolism of sex hormones)
14. Trauma
Assess: intake/history, ACE questionnaire, neurotransmitter levels via OATs urine test
15. Epigenetics/Genetics
Assess: intake/history, Methylation blood test with Genomics (buccal swab/saliva) for SNPs

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