

Making the Fatigue-Weight Gain Connection

Every day, you hear about people struggling with arthritis, depression, insomnia, allergies and indigestion. But the biggest problems that afflict more people are fatigue and weight gain. Those two ailments by far outdistance any other problem.

Unfortunately, many doctors and health care practitioners haven't realized that these two problems go hand in hand for one simple reason: A person's metabolism is burning the wrong fuel—or more specifically, they are burning the wrong calories.

To produce energy—energy to walk, run, dance or simply to keep your heart beating—requires your body to break down calories from either carbohydrates, proteins or fats. Those are the three fuel sources or options your body can turn to in order to produce energy. There are no other options; it's one of those three fuels.

The key to successfully taking the weight off, to keeping your energy up and cravings and moods swings down, is to make sure your body is burning calories from stored body fats. Those who constantly struggle with their weight and energy level as well as cravings, mood swings and irritability are usually burning carbs and proteins throughout the day.

The energy we produce comes as a result of the calories we burn from the foods we eat as well as the calories we have stored on our body. Our food is loaded with carbohydrates, proteins and fats. Our body has the ability to store carbohydrates, proteins (lean muscle) and fats.

The important thing to understand is that you don't have a

huge reservoir of carbohydrates to pull from. You can quickly burn through all the carbs in your body, which leads to cravings, low blood sugar, mood swings, irritability and more because your metabolism is burning the wrong fuel.

Burning calories from the breakdown of lean muscle (protein) can be done, but it is not the best option. You will see people lose weight very rapidly, but the weight they lose is really the lean muscle they lost. This happens a lot with fad diets and rapid-weight-loss programs that make all kinds of claims.

Burning or Storing Fats?

The problem with fats is not that you can store up a huge reservoir of fats around your tummy, rear and hips. The problem for many people is that their metabolism is so out of balance and not functioning properly that it can't burn stored body fats. This is why so many people are dieting and exercising and cutting calories and still not losing those unwanted pounds. Their body is burning the wrong calories. They are burning calories from the breakdown of carbohydrates and protein—not stored body fats.

The reason why fatigue and weight gain go hand in hand is easy to understand. When you burn 1 gram of fat, you produce two-and-a-half times more energy than you do when you burn a gram of protein or carbohydrates. Think about it—you get more than twice as much energy when you burn calories from fats than you do when you burn carbs and proteins. Not only that, but you also tap into that reservoir of stored body fat, which helps keep your weight down.

Unfortunately, many people who struggle with these two issues as well as cravings, mood swings and irritability are always burning the wrong fuel. Those who are successful at keeping the weight off and energy up are constantly burning calories from stored body fats.

How Is My Metabolism Functioning?

Increasing or speeding up your metabolism doesn't mean you are burning more calories from stored body fats. You can burn an extra 300 calories a day on a treadmill, but it doesn't tell you if you burned calories from fats.

The quickest way to determine if you are staying in your fat-burning zone throughout the day or constantly burning carbs and protein is simple.

Do you struggle with:

1. Cravings or low blood sugar?
2. Mid-morning or afternoon slumps?
3. Inability to focus and concentrate?
4. Skipping breakfast or other meals?
5. Regularly eating refined, processed foods or soft drinks?
6. Becoming irritable if your meals are missed or delayed?
7. Using stimulants, such as coffee or other energy drinks?
8. Having a hard time staying asleep?

If you answered yes to a few of these questions, there is a good chance your metabolism is burning the wrong calories and a primary reason why you have not been able reach your desired health goal.

To improve your metabolism and make sure it is burning calories from stored body fats, it is important to understand that blood sugar and your ability to keep it stable throughout the day is critical. Keeping your stress hormones at normal levels is equally important. The reason stress (cortisol and adrenaline are your primary stress hormones) and diet (insulin and glucagon are two hormones that regulate blood sugar) need to be examined is that these hormones trigger your metabolism to either burn fats or store fats.

Skipping meals is the worst thing you can do for your energy

and weight loss efforts, because it causes your blood sugar to drop and causes an increase in your stress hormones, cortisol and adrenaline, two hormones that tell your body to burn carbs and proteins.

The second worst thing you can do is not eat enough protein or fat in your meal or eat too much refined white flour and white sugar (processed, refined foods). If you are eating a bagel and cup of coffee for breakfast or cereal and a glass of juice or a couple of slices with a soft drink, you don't have enough good protein and fats to keep your blood sugar stable. This causes more insulin to be produced, which causes your blood sugar to drop rapidly and causes another surge in cortisol and adrenaline.

The constant rise and fall of your blood sugar along with the spikes in your stress hormones keeps your metabolism from functioning the way it is supposed to. This is why addressing fatigue and weight gain is more than revving up your metabolism or burning more calories. You have to address all the issues that are throwing your metabolism off.

Stress is that X-factor that is commonly overlooked, because stress and the hormones that your adrenal glands produce trigger your body to burn calories from the breakdown of carbs and proteins. So if you are dealing with prolonged stress, which many of us are from the time we wake up until the time we fall asleep, your adrenal glands will pump out more cortisol and adrenaline.

This tells your metabolism to burn more carbs and lean muscle and takes you out of your fat-burning zone.

It is good to finally start hearing more about adrenal fatigue and exhaustion, because it is truly an overlooked problem that is an underlying problem for many of the health problems out there and a major reason why a good adrenal support product is a must for almost everyone.

Putting It All Together

Your body burns calories to produce energy by breaking down carbs, proteins or fats. If you are struggling with fatigue, weight gain and other related problems, there is a good chance that your metabolism is burning the wrong fuel. To restore your metabolism, you need to look at how you are regulating your blood sugar and stress hormones.

A quick test can be done by going to our online health quizzes to check and see if your metabolism is functioning properly or if stress is part of the problem. When you start addressing those issues, you will be amazed at how much better you begin to feel.

In *To Burn or Not to Burn—Fat Is the Question*, many of these issues are discussed, along with how exercise can be a double edge sword when it comes to health and wellness. It's not how many calories you burn, its how many calories are you burning from stored body fats.

Dr. Len Lopez *is a nutrition and fitness expert and author of To Burn or Not to Burn—Fat Is the Question and Five Steps Closer and the creator of The Work Horse. His approach to health and wellness is to treat the cause, not the symptom. You can also use his online health quizzes to identify where your health problems are coming from.*

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