

Shedding Pesky Pounds

by Reginald B. Cherry, M.D.

Question: I'VE BEEN LOSING WEIGHT, but I'm having trouble shedding the last five to 10 pounds. Is there a natural product I can take that might reduce food cravings? Also, I've heard that drinking green tea can help burn calories. Is this true?

Answer: Food cravings are not a sign of weakness or lack of will power. The craving for carbohydrates and sugar is directly related to an imbalance of the serotonin chemical in the brain. As serotonin increases, appetite decreases.

A natural chemical compound called 5-HTP (5-Hydroxytryptophan) found in the griffonia plant can affect serotonin levels and suppress appetite. By taking 5-HTP in supplement form (according to package directions), you can control your food cravings and eat less.

Regarding green tea, what you heard is correct. Studies published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that green tea has thermogenic effects, which means it enables you to burn more calories while your body is at rest.

These thermogenic properties also promote fat oxidation, meaning that you

burn more fat as well. Another chemical in green tea increases metabolism, so your body burns more food for fuel and stores less.

“Green tea appears to rev up the rate at which the liver breaks down fat, decrease fat absorption from the gut and boost levels of the neurotransmitter norepinephrine, which plays a role in how the body burns calories,” says Timothy Birdsall, a naturopath at the Cancer Treatment Centers of America in Zion, Illinois.

Green tea is available in supplement form, so you can gain the benefits without having to drink huge quantities of tea daily. To lose weight and keep it off you must exercise and eat a healthy diet (low-fat with lots of fruits and vegetables and fiber). Also, to help in your weight-loss efforts I recommend that you look for a natural supplement that contains 5-HTP and green tea extract to help you achieve your goals.