



SUGAR, STRESS & HORMONES

The Top 3 Saboteurs of Fat Loss

FACT: Sugar is killing us.

It's not the couple of teaspoons we're stirring into our morning coffee, but the sweetened additives hidden inside processed foods — even the seemingly healthy, low-fat ones like cereal and tomato sauce — that we eat every day.

In fact, some animal studies show that sugar is eight times more addictive than cocaine. Cocaine!!!

Sugar is the new nicotine. Sugar is the new fat — except fat is not addictive in the way that sugar is.

Nearly 70% of Americans and 1.5 billion people worldwide are overweight, and that's expected to balloon to 2.3 billion people worldwide by 2015.

It's not as if government agencies aren't condemning sugar left and right. Yet the public isn't catching on. It's hard to face facts: our addiction is continually stoked by the sugar and flour tucked inside processed foods and sugary beverages: the more we eat of it, the stronger our addiction and our denial.

"If it was as simple as eating less and exercising more, which is what our government and our food industry tells us, we'd all be skinny," says obesity expert Robert Lustig, MD.

"We keep being told that if people could control themselves and not be lazy gluttons, we'd all be fine."

"But the truth is, people can't manage their behavior and their eating because their taste buds and their biology have all been hijacked by processed, hyper-palatable, high glucose, high sugar foods that drive their hormones and neurotransmitters to make them eat more," he says.



“We’re consuming pharmacological doses of sugar and flour never before seen in the history of the human race. We’re consuming on average 146 pounds of flour and 152 pounds of sugar every year. That is a lot.”

These deadly white powders are quickly absorbed into our bodies, which are biologically programmed for food shortages, not today's abundance. That's why that load of sugar, carbs and calories gets stored, fat-banking, if you will, for a starvation period that never happens.

As a result, insulin levels spike, which causes a domino effect that includes storing more belly fat, lowering your good cholesterol but boosting the bad stuff that causes heart disease, and a reduction in hormone levels that can affect sex drive, cause depression and even trigger acne flare-ups and other skin problems. Yet you also feel hungrier and crave more sugar and carbs, which make these symptoms worse.

“You feel like crap, and you don't realize these symptoms are probably connected to what you eat,” says Lustig, a neuro-endocrinologist who has been studying sugar, carbohydrates and obesity at the University of California San Francisco for several years.



FACT: Stress can make it difficult to lose weight

Most people admit that when they're under stress, healthy eating habits can be difficult to maintain. Whether eating to fill an emotional need or grabbing fast food simply because there's no time to prepare something healthy, a stressed-out lifestyle is rarely a healthy one. But weight gain when under stress may also be at least partly due to the body's system of hormonal checks and balances, which can actually promote weight gain when you're stressed out, according to some researchers.

Cortisol is a critical hormone with many actions in the body. Normally, cortisol is secreted by the adrenal glands in a pattern called a diurnal variation, meaning that levels of cortisol in the bloodstream vary depending upon the time of day (normally, cortisol levels are highest in the early morning and lowest around midnight).



Cortisol is important for the maintenance of blood pressure as well as the provision of energy for the body. Cortisol stimulates fat and carbohydrate metabolism for fast energy, and stimulates insulin release and maintenance of blood sugar levels. The end result of these actions can be an increase in appetite.

High Cortisol Symptoms:	
food cravings	low immune function causing...
lots of abdominal fat	...frequent colds and infections
insulin resistance	high blood pressure
high blood sugar	disturbed sleep
mood swings	depression
high anxiety	premature aging
brain fog	muscle and bone loss
irritability	hair loss
stomach ulcer	skin conditions, eczema, acne

Up until about age 40, estrogen in women and testosterone in men controls fat distribution, keeping it away from the abdomen. Once these hormones decline, it becomes easier for excessive calories to be stored deep inside the belly. Once you hit 30, your lean muscle mass decreases by about a pound a year. If you're inactive, that lost muscle mass often is replaced by fat.

Cortisol is a hormone that your body uses in response to stress. From a fitness standpoint, one of the most critical things to know about cortisol is that it is the enemy of muscle development. It is a catabolic steroid, which is the opposite of the stuff pro athletes take and get suspended.

tr Excess cortisol also reduces T-cell activity, compromising the immune system. It has also been shown to increase blood pressure.

Although this stress hormone is helpful in the short term, the rise in cortisol levels over time can lead to following health issues:

- High blood pressure
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Excessive abdominal fat (This tummy fat affects your appearances and can be a major cause for diseases such as type-2 diabetes, heart attack, strokes and asthma.)



Here is how cortisol can increase belly fat. Belly fat, also known as visceral fat, contains an enzyme that controls tissue cortisol concentrations.

This enzyme is present in all fat cells, but is more highly concentrated in the visceral fat cells.

There is another strike against belly fat when it comes to cortisol. Belly fat has approximately four times the number of cortisol receptors than “regular” fat. So, not only does it contribute more to cortisol production, it can possibly boost the tendency of cortisol to increase fat levels.

More troubling is that long periods of high cortisol levels can cause existing fat in the body to actually be moved around your body and re-deposited as belly fat. Belly fat is the more dangerous fat that has been shown in studies to contribute to all manner of problems.

Here are some strategies to help you keep cortisol levels within acceptable limits.

First of all, although long term elevated cortisol levels are detrimental to your health, you need some to function normally, so don't try to eliminate the stuff entirely. It is naturally secreted by the adrenal glands in times of stress so that your body can mobilize the necessary resources to escape the stressful situation.

- Reducing stress: Since chronic stress keeps cortisol levels high, it stands to reason that reducing the cause of the cortisol secretions will keep levels lower.
- Eat a well balanced diet: High protein diets promote high cortisol levels. You need adequate protein to support muscle development, no more.
- Avoid alcohol and reduce caffeine: Gee, no coffee, now no beer! What next?

FACT: Your Hormones balance is essential to healthy, sustained fat loss



We now know the importance of hormones in the fat loss equation.

Eating sugar, not sleeping, exercising or managing your stress is guaranteed to spike your insulin and cortisol levels impacting on our ability (or inability) to lose fat and maintain a healthy weight and body.

Thyroid hormones as well as Estrogen, Progesterone and Testosterone can also play a major role in weight and their healthy balance is essential to healthy fat loss.

Hormones direct our body's responses: how we respond to outside stimuli, like food, exercise, stress, sleep, and more. They play a huge role in how your metabolism functions—how you use food for fuel, whether food gets stored or burned, whether you feel hungry or full, whether you experience cravings or not, your mood, and even your motivation to exercise.

With that said, it's important to understand that there's no absolute level they need to be in order for you to lose weight. Every person's resting or exercising hormonal levels are unique. And because of this, hormone testing (at least as it relates to weight loss) is tricky.

Because hormones give us feedback that we can "feel"—the feeling of fullness for example—you can use sensations to let us know if our hormones are in balance *for you*. The three key sensations to track are hunger, energy and, cravings (HEC). These three things give us clues into how our hormones are behaving. When I have little hunger, my energy is balanced, and my cravings are low, then I know that my hormones are at a balanced place *for me*.

You cannot lose weight and keep it off forever if your HEC is unbalanced. Because if you're experiencing ravenous hunger, energy swings, and insatiable cravings on a "diet," chances are you are not going to be staying on that diet for long. For more information on determining your own hormonal balance issues, sign up for our Special Integrative Medicine Package with Dr Alicia Johnson, ND.

More information may be found at:

www.pilates1901.com/t-school-registration