

# LOSING WEIGHT NATURALLY

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The facts related to the incidence of obesity and being overweight are really quite scary. Over 55% of Australians are overweight or obese. 75 to 80% of adults become overweight at some time in their life while 315 million people worldwide are obese. The prevalence of obesity has tripled in the last 30 years! It is considered an epidemic!

Obesity is much more than an issue of aesthetics. It inevitably causes a number of pathological metabolic changes such as high triglycerides, insulin resistance, hypertension and inflammation. With more than 33% of Australians on a diet or trying to lose weight at any one time it is a common issue most of us can relate to, to varying degrees. With one third of adults becoming overweight before the age of 20 and another two thirds doing so after that it is clear that this is an issue that affects a lot of people. It is also on the rise and will not go away unless we begin to do something about it.

Obesity has a major economical impact on the individual and our society, in addition to the major health hazards it presents. Most obese patients are on a minimum of 5-6 medications a day with the number increasing with the development of the different commodities that obesity can cause. Such obesity-related health conditions include and increased likelihood of cardiovascular disease, thrombosis, diabetes, insulin resistance, cancer, infertility, hypogonadism, and fat-soluble toxicity. These are quite serious implications, some life threatening and some are the major causes of death in Australia!

The fact is many people have tried unsuccessfully to diet or if they are lucky enough to shed some fat, they struggle to keep it off. Rebound fat gain almost always follows fat loss. In fact, dieting can often be harmful as some diets can impact negatively on your thyroid function and lower your metabolic rate further. This can result in easier weight gain post-dieting than before you even began! Prevention of rebound fat gain lies in understanding the essential causes and the metabolic defects present in obesity. Until these factors are addressed, permanent fat loss will be extremely difficult to achieve.

The development of obesity involves a lot more than just ones diet; the lifestyle and environmental factors affecting the individual must also be taken into consideration. However the role of ones diet should not be underestimated as the active over-consumption of calories and lack of exercise contribute directly to obesity. Secondly different diet, lifestyle and environmental factors can disturb the appetite control leading to a passive over-consumption of calories. Thirdly, factors such as toxicity and stress can cause defects in neuroendocrine control which can disrupt regulatory processes to insulin, adrenal function, neurotransmitter activity and others. Put simply, these all swing the balance of fat accumulation and fat burning to favor the storage of fat, thus increasing obesity.

On top of this, the excess fat deposits of overweight and obese individuals can have significant metabolic effects. *They actually have the ability to increase inflammation, interfere with hormonal balance and essentially bring about the causes of obesity therefore creating a vicious cycle and increasing the tendency to gain even more weight!*

Have you ever wondered why people eat too much? It is important to look at the amount someone eats in weight loss, along with the type of foods and underlying hormonal and metabolic imbalances that can all interfere with permanent healthy weight loss. The answer to the amount of food eaten is not always straightforward with numerous factors being

involved. We humans have stronger hunger signals and weaker signals to signify we have had enough. We are genetically programmed to increase energy stores during times of plenty to prepare for times of famine and in between harvests. It is encoded in us to eat more when it is there as tomorrow you may go hungry. However in the western world in which we are living, there are rarely any shortages of food for the majority of us.

In addition to this genetic disposition are the highly palatable foods readily at our disposal. The pleasure response from palatable foods is strong enough to override the body's satiety signals- we all know how hard it is to stop when you are full, leaving food on your plate when the food is extremely tasty and enjoyable! Adding further insult to injury, our portion sizes have significantly increased. Everything is "value-sized" or comes in larger packets or serving sizes. In such a challenging environment, the difference between those who gain weight and those who don't may be because of their overall state of health. New research has uncovered that stress and inflammatory hormones can interfere with our appetites. Most of us are aware to some degree of the relationship of overeating as a form of medication in stressed, anxious or depressed individuals.

Adding even more insult to injury, the ability to burn fat is also often depressed in obese and overweight individuals; their overall metabolic rate is slower. Like appetite regulation, the ability to burn fat is influenced by our hormones, inflammatory cytokines and our neurotransmitters (brain chemicals). A defective ability to burn fat effectively will cause a decrease in energy expenditure and will increase the tendency to gain weight, even on low calories diets.

As our fat storage increases, it actually begins to behave as if it is a part of our endocrine system, secreting hormones and powerful cytokines, creating inflammation, appetite dysregulation, and insulin resistance. When in an insulin resistant state, the mobilization of fat is very difficult and the muscles ability to use energy stores is impaired. The more obese someone becomes the more difficult it is to burn fat and the more inclined they are to even more weight gain!

As you can see it is a vicious cycle and to break it and correct it requires much more than just a diet plan that will only work in the short term. The causes of obesity and the response to weight loss programs will vary considerably between patients. This is due to individual metabolic profiles, a direct result of our different genetic make up and environmental influences. This explains how you may be able to lose weight following a particular diet while your neighbor or close friend will gain weight on the same program!

As a nation we are not getting any healthier. We need to act quickly and sensibly and begin making some positive changes to our health in order to prevent serious chronic diseases and poor quality of life in the future. The trouble is that until now, most weight loss strategies have failed to completely address the complicated nature of weight gain and obesity. Many people every day are struggling to maintain a healthy body composition and many who do lose weight will quickly put it all back on again, and often more. Until they resolve the underlying factors related to their weight, they will continue to find weight loss and weight maintenance an uphill battle.

Different dietary plans will be better suited to different individuals; not everyone will get the same results from the exact same diet. Also as each person's lifestyle is unique, we need to develop a plan that you are able to follow whilst still working, studying, and looking after the family etc. This is why it is most beneficial and logical for you to follow a diet plan that has been specifically designed for your individual needs and to maintain regular contact with

someone who can guide you along the program, making adjustments as required. We have many different options available for you, from diet plans utilizing your own food to shakes and meal replacements. As you now are very well aware, there are also a lot of other factors that need to be considered. Any toxicity, hormonal imbalance, inflammation and excessive stress hormones all need to be addresses in order to achieve your best results as well as remove the underlying imbalances that will contribute to rebound weight gain. Your genetic individuality, metabolism, and environmental influences are not to be discounted as they also impact on your weight as mentioned before.

Proper analysis of your progress is also essential in gauging your success and helping to motivate you to continue making positive changes to your health and life. Having a BIA performed on a regular basis is the best way to truly measure your changes in body composition. This tool is invaluable for motivation as it is quite disheartening to hop on the scales and find that you have lost nothing and in some weeks may have put on weight. Your BIA results will actually tell us whether you have gained fat or gained muscle. As muscle weighs more than fat, when you are doing resistance exercise along with your dietary modifications, it is common to have some weeks when the scales do not change. Knowing the difference means you are able to appreciate your efforts and not feel let down when you know you have been well behaved.

Your one-to-one consultations with your practitioner mean you are getting personalized, quality advice in a private and comfortable environment. There are no weigh-ins in front of other people and your time in the clinic is for you to ask any questions of your practitioner and get the information related *specifically to your individual needs*. We welcome you to allow us to assist you on your journey to a more vibrant, healthy, happy and active you!