

Overlooked Factors That Could Be Making Us Fat

One of the most serious health challenges we face today is obesity, and I have no doubt it will continue to be a major issue for years to come.

It's a complex problem that can no longer be solved by just suggesting that one needs to eat less



Dr. David Williams

and exercise more. While it's true that you need to have a caloric deficit to lose weight (or body fat), a deficit can also cause a loss of muscle tissue and wreck your metabolic rate, both of which make it practically impossible to keep the weight off. One study found that only 4.6 percent of those who followed a calorie-deficit diet were able to avoid regaining weight after three years. (*Int J Obes Relat Metab Disord* 2000 Sep;24(9):1107-10)

As is the case with all health issues, we have to take into account that everyone is genetically and biochemically different, lives in different environments, and has varying states of health and amounts of stress. These are not excuses. Rather, all of these factors negate the idea that one

program for losing and maintaining weight will work for everyone.

There are, however, some helpful ideas and techniques that have been shown to be universally applicable to weight management. Once you understand these principles, you'll know how to tweak your lifestyle to lose excess fat and weight.

Hormones Are Key

If your goal is to simply lose weight temporarily, then any kind of starvation diet or extreme exercise will work. But the key is being able to maintain weight loss on a long-term basis. To accomplish this, your hormones must be balanced.

Hormones, not calories, control your metabolism and the composition of your body tissue. Hormones, not calories, influence your appetite and satiety (the feeling of being full). However, no one hormone completely controls each of these functions. There are definitely more dominant ones in each area, but they are constantly interacting. That is why we need a *balance* of the various hormones. And since we are all different, it requires a little bit of detective work for most of us to achieve this balance.

There are some people, either through luck or intuition, who

have found this balance and don't have a weight issue. From a food standpoint, they've found a diet that facilitates hormone balance, matches their metabolic type, coincides with their personal tastes, and provides them satiety. If you haven't achieved a similar balance, it's time to take a closer look at what can be done to accomplish this.

Thyroid Hormones

One of the primary sources of metabolic hormones is the thyroid gland. If you want to lose weight, it's the first thing that needs to be checked and, if necessary, treated.

Underactive thyroid problems are some of the most commonly overlooked and underdiagnosed health concerns in this country. An underactive thyroid lowers your rate of metabolism, which results in excess fat storage and weight gain. Correcting an underactive thyroid can truly be life changing.

One of the most effective ways to rebalance the thyroid is to take a liquid iodine product called Iosol (available through various online retailers). For the first two weeks, I recommend four drops of Iosol in water or under the tongue each day, and then reduce the dosage to two drops per day. (Note: Under

no circumstances should you ingest antiseptic or topical iodine.)

If the Iosol alone does not help, then I suggest taking three tablets of a glandular product called Thyrophin PMG by Standard Process (standardprocess.com), along with just one drop of Iosol per day. Thyrophin PMG can often be used in place of prescription thyroid medications.

For people whose thyroid no longer functions at all, hormones are necessary. In these cases, I recommend using natural thyroid extracts in place of synthetic hormones.

Checking for an underactive thyroid using the Barnes Basal Temperature Test is something you can easily do at home. See the box below for instructions.

Estrogen & Progesterone

One factor that blocks hormone production by the thyroid is estrogen-like compounds called xenoestrogens (or “gender benders”). These are all over our

environment, including food and water supplies. Some of the most prevalent include BPA, dioxins, phthalates, pesticides, herbicides, and unfermented soy.

Xenoestrogens are endocrine disrupters. These compounds create a situation called estrogen dominance, another growing health threat, particularly in women. Thanks to xenoestrogens, we’ve seen a dramatic change in the age that girls reach puberty (from 14 years of age in 1900 to as early as 8 years old today). It’s just one glaring example of how powerful and pervasive they’ve become.

Fluctuations in estrogen (and xenoestrogens) can trigger the autoimmune disease Hashimoto’s, where the immune system attacks the thyroid gland. Estrogen dominance is often a symptom of thyroid nodules, thyroid cancer, and elevated anti-thyroglobulin antibodies, all of which can disrupt thyroid hormone production and metabolism.

Under normal circumstances, the other “female hormone,”

progesterone, works to counteract and keep estrogen levels in balance. The importance of progesterone in this equation continues to be overlooked by most doctors. Fortunately, natural progesterone is still readily available and totally safe. (For detailed information on this topic, refer to the May 2014 issue of *Alternatives*.)

Testosterone

Testosterone is the hormone that differentiates male and female physiques. Even though it’s largely considered a “male hormone,” women need a certain amount of testosterone to maintain sex drive, bone strength, energy levels, and lean muscle mass.

Over the past couple of generations, we’ve started to see a decrease in testosterone in both men and women. This is in large part due to xenoestrogens.

Low testosterone in men results in an overall increase in body fat, particularly in the waist and chest area (breast enlargement).

Barnes Basal Temperature Test

1. Place a thermometer by your bed at night. If you use a mercury one, shake it down to 96° F before retiring.
2. When you wake up the next morning, immediately place the thermometer in your armpit and check your axillary temperature before getting out of bed. Relax and remain still during the test. (Note: Women in their menstrual years get the most accurate readings on the second or third day after menstrual flow starts.)
3. Record the temperature. A reading between 97.2° and 98.2° is considered normal; temperatures below 97.2° generally indicate you have low thyroid function.

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Fat tissue produces an enzyme (aromatase) that converts testosterone into estradiol, the major form of estrogen. Excess body fat results in excessive aromatase activity, which decreases testosterone and increases levels of feminizing estrogen.

Low testosterone also decreases insulin sensitivity, leading to higher levels of insulin, elevated blood sugar, increased fat storage, and metabolic syndrome, all of which contribute to a self-perpetuating cycle of weight gain.

Balancing These Hormones

In many cases, you can boost testosterone through exercise and by avoiding xenoestrogens as much as possible.

Most commercial meat and dairy products in this country contain residual hormones that were used on livestock or in their feed. The only way to avoid these xenoestrogens is to buy organic or eat wild game. Be sure to avoid exposure to pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides as well.

Most public water sources are contaminated. If you don't have your own deep-water well that has been tested, I suggest drinking filtered or, even better, distilled water.

Shampoos, lotions, soaps, toothpaste, and cosmetics very often contain xenoestrogens in the form of parabens, phthalates, stearylkonium chloride, and other compounds. These xenoestrogens are absorbed directly through the skin. And finally, unfermented soy and soy products are some of the most

common food culprits that need to be avoided.

Certain foods and spices help negate the effects of xenoestrogens by either blocking their absorption, increasing the production of detoxifying enzymes, or binding to estrogen receptor sites used by xenoestrogens. These include cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Bok choy, Brussels sprouts, etc.), leafy greens, seaweed, sesame seeds, green tea, flaxseed, Brazil nuts, turmeric, and cayenne and black pepper. Supplements like zinc, calcium D glucarate, and indole-3-carbinol also help metabolize and block xenoestrogens.

Gastrointestinal health—more specifically, having healthy gut flora—is also important for hormone balance. Beneficial bacteria in the gut not only help neutralize xenoestrogens and other potential toxins, they also increase their excretion rate. Beneficial bacteria metabolize and recycle various hormones. And from a weight loss standpoint, these bacteria actually control our appetite by influencing neurotransmitter production in the brain. In fact, the diversity of microorganisms in the gut has been shown to predict whether we end up lean or obese.

For these reasons, eating a wide variety of fermented foods and taking a high-quality probiotic supplement are integral for anyone trying to lose weight.

If these dietary changes along with exercise aren't enough to bring testosterone levels into the normal range, then supplementing

with testosterone hormone may be necessary.

Cortisol: Stress Hormone

Cortisol is a necessary hormone produced by the adrenal glands to help the body deal with stress.

Under stressful situations, the body converts amino acids from muscle tissue into glucose to supply energy. If this happens occasionally, it's a protective function. If it occurs day after day, though, it's a warning sign to the body that it needs to increase fat storage so that it will have a readily available supply of energy to deal with more intense stress in the future. One of the most convenient areas to store this "emergency" fat is in the belly. In fact, there is a direct relationship between chronically elevated cortisol and belly fat.

The presence of belly fat provides some interesting insight into just how adaptive our bodies are.

Belly fat isn't the layer of fat that covers your abs—that is actually subcutaneous fat, which is deposited directly below the skin. Belly fat is stored deeper inside the body around various organs. As belly fat increases, it pushes outward and results in a paunch or "beer belly."

The body maintains belly fat so that it has a reservoir of energy when it might run low on carbohydrates during periods of unexpected stress. Belly fat is easily burned—more easily than subcutaneous fat because it is more responsive to the catecholamine hormones (epinephrine and norepinephrine, often referred to as adrenaline) released by the adrenal glands. And while belly fat may be easier to burn, following a low-calorie diet isn't the way to

do it. The only way to lose belly fat and keep it off is by improving hormone balance.

When your body senses any kind of stress, your adrenal glands release cortisol. Cortisol triggers all the body functions needed to deal with stress—elevating heart rate and blood pressure, stopping the digestive system, tensing the muscles, and increasing the sensitivity of your senses. All of these functions require energy, so immediately, cortisol triggers a rise in blood sugar to produce that energy.

Cortisol also activates portions of the brain that crave pleasurable foods, particularly carbohydrates that can be broken down quickly and converted to energy. When was the last time you were under stress and suddenly craved grilled chicken and broccoli? Probably never. Rather, you craved high-energy carbohydrates. In fact, the influence of cortisol during stress can be so strong that making the healthy food choices is almost impossible.

This stress response is usually self-limiting. In other words, once the perceived threat passes, hormone levels return to normal and other body activities resume as usual. Unfortunately, much of the stress we face in today's world doesn't get resolved quickly. The constant demands of work and family, and trying to make ends meet, may seem like minor hassles compared to fighting off a saber-toothed tiger, but our primitive bodies still perceive them as threats and continue to react in much the same way.

When stress is chronic, higher levels of cortisol become problematic. This is particularly true when

it comes to fat storage and weight gain.

Chronically high levels of cortisol increase the production of a neurotransmitter called neuropeptide Y (NPY). Its main functions are to promote food intake, store fat, and decrease physical activity. Under normal circumstances, increased NPY production is a survival mechanism to deal with plummeting blood sugar levels. But during periods of unresolved, chronic stress, it just leads to overeating, fat storage, and under-activity.

Insulin/Cortisol Connection

Insulin is produced by the pancreas. Like cortisol, insulin is an essential hormone. Also like cortisol, too much insulin can be detrimental to your health and weight.

During stress, the body is set up and geared to either fight or flight (run). If one of these events takes place, the extra blood sugar is utilized and everything calms down and returns to normal. However, if there is no fight or flight, the extra carbohydrates dumped into the bloodstream aren't burned and the body must release additional insulin to clear the surplus of glucose from the bloodstream. Insulin's job is to store these excess carbs as belly fat.

By understanding the way cortisol and insulin work together, you can plan your meals and exercise so that you burn as much fat as possible rather than store it as belly fat. For example, certain forms of exercise, like interval training and weightlifting, act as beneficial forms of self-limiting "stress." They temporarily raise cortisol, causing

the release of fat for energy, and this results in metabolic fat burning.

Especially during short-duration, high-intensity exercise, there's also a release of human growth hormone (HGH) and testosterone. Since insulin levels are low, you have the perfect scenario for burning fat. As for weightlifting, a side bonus is that it makes muscle tissue more sensitive (meaning more efficient) to the effects of insulin.

For the best results, avoid refined carbohydrates, sport drinks, or any food prior to working out. You want your body to utilize your fats stores during and immediately after the workout instead of burning calories you've just consumed. Unless you're a true athlete, I wouldn't be concerned about any pre-workout nutrition.

The cortisol/insulin connection also helps explain why skipping meals or going on a low-calorie diet, especially if you're under constant stress, will sabotage weight loss efforts. When you skip meals or go on low-calorie diets, extra cortisol very often needs to be released in an effort to keep blood sugar levels within the normal range. Cortisol converts the amino acids from muscle tissue into fuel. Muscle loss can be a real issue with the wrong dietary habits.

Cortisol also creates strong cravings for high-carbohydrate foods, making any possible gains on these diets temporary and hard to maintain. The end effects can be even worse for those under constant stress or anxiety about their weight. In both instances, cortisol levels increase even more.

Additionally, when cortisol levels increase blood sugar, there's

a corresponding rise in insulin levels. When this occurs occasionally, it's not a problem. But when it occurs day after day, it creates a near-perfect environment for developing insulin resistance. Cells become less sensitive to insulin, and after a period of time this can lead to type 2 diabetes.

Insulin & Fat Storage

When you eat, food is absorbed into the bloodstream as glucose, which causes blood sugar levels to rise. Normal blood sugar levels are typically below 115 (mg/dl). When blood sugar rises to around 160, the pancreas releases insulin. In response, blood sugar is converted to a type of fat called triglyceride. Insulin then pushes this fat into muscle, red blood cells, and fat cells in an effort to store energy.

The higher the blood sugar goes, the more insulin that gets released. If you routinely eat high-carb meals that necessitate the release of large amounts of insulin, cells become less sensitive to insulin and ever-increasing amounts are needed to normalize blood sugar levels. Increased insulin also boosts your appetite and causes the excess blood sugar to be stored as fat.

When cells don't respond to insulin normally, you experience "insulin-resistant hunger." When you consume carbohydrates, your pancreas pumps in more insulin, but it's not efficient at dropping blood sugar levels. Your brain doesn't feel satisfied since the sugar isn't being utilized, and you end up craving more carbs to satisfy the hunger. That single chip

you were going to snack on ends up being the entire bag.

Carbohydrates are the easiest foods for the body to digest and convert to energy. They are the body's preferred source of fuel. They also happen to be the food preference of most of the bacteria in the gut that cause disease and wreck havoc. With the combination of insulin-resistant hunger and carb-craving neurotransmitters being sent to the brain by bad gut bacteria, making smart food choices becomes more difficult. But making dietary changes is far easier when you keep the two "hunger hormones," ghrelin and leptin, in balance.

Ghrelin & Leptin

Ghrelin and leptin are the primary hormones that regulate hunger. They both affect the brain but are produced in other parts of the body. Ghrelin is secreted in the lining of the stomach. Leptin is secreted primarily in fat cells, but also in the stomach, skeletal muscle, and heart.

The easiest way to remember what each hormone does is by the first letter. **G**hrelin **g**rows your hunger; **l**eptin **l**owers it. If you produce enough leptin, you feel full and satisfied. If your leptin levels are low and your ghrelin levels are high, you'll always feel like you're starving. There needs to be a balance of the two.

Ghrelin and leptin are strongly influenced by sleep and the types of food you eat.

How Sleep Plays a Role

Numerous studies have found that inadequate sleep is directly connected to appetite, hormones,

metabolism, and obesity. Levels of ghrelin and leptin are contributing factors.

In one study involving 1,024 participants, those who habitually slept less than eight hours a night had a higher body mass index (BMI). Less sleep was not only associated with more body weight, it was also shown to disrupt metabolism by detrimentally influencing the hunger hormones. Leptin levels were 15.5 percent lower for habitual sleep of five hours versus eight hours, and ghrelin was 14.9 percent higher with five hours of sleep versus eight.

Another study found that sleep-deprived individuals experienced lower metabolic rates, were much hungrier than usual, and craved salty or sweet foods. (*PLoS Med* 2004 Dec;1(3):e62) (*Psychoneuroendocrinology* 2009 May;34(4):540-5) (*J Nutr* 2005 May;135(5):1331-5) (*Sleep Med Rev* 2007 Jun;11(3):163-78)

Normalizing the feedback communication between leptin and ghrelin with quality sleep is a crucial step in allowing the natural mechanisms of the body to attain proper weight. Based on the studies, it appears that roughly anything less than seven hours of sleep can increase ghrelin.

The inability to get proper sleep has become a huge problem for much of the population in this country. If you have this problem, here are just a few suggestions:

- **Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and other stimulants.**
- **Sleep in complete darkness. Even the smallest light from the clock, television, etc. has been shown to be detrimental to the release of the sleep hormone (melatonin)**

and deep sleep. Wearing a sleep mask can help, but light hitting any part of the body can lower melatonin production.

- **Avoid exposure to bright lights at least an hour prior to bedtime.**

Sleep deprivation can become a vicious, self-perpetuating cycle that has direct links to everything from heart disease, breast cancer, and depression to diabetes. It disrupts the entire hormone system. Chronic stress and cortisol can play a major role.

When cortisol levels remain consistently high throughout the day, it depresses the release of melatonin, making it almost impossible to get a good night's sleep. Inadequate deep sleep prevents the release of the body's natural growth hormone and leads to reductions in testosterone and estrogen. All of these are necessary for tissue repair and overall health.

How Food Plays a Role

Proteins are by far the strongest macronutrient for suppressing ghrelin and appetite. Research shows that after individuals were fed a high-protein meal, their ghrelin levels declined gradually and they were satisfied for several hours. This is just one of the reasons why you should eat protein with every meal. It's also why I have a protein shake each morning.

Not only does protein help keep ghrelin levels down and curb hunger, it also helps stabilize blood sugar, reduces the release of insulin, and provides the essential amino acids needed for tissue repair, enzyme production, and immune function. Protein also appears to improve leptin sensitivity.

A reduction in ghrelin also occurs when stretch receptors in

the stomach are activated. This is another factor that helps signal that satiety has been reached. You can use this to your advantage by consuming foods rich in fiber.

Vegetables are great and should be eaten with practically every meal, but foods higher in soluble and viscous (gel-like) fiber have been shown to exhibit the most powerful hunger-suppressing response. These include apples, ground flax and chia seeds and, to a lesser extent, beans and legumes. The "bulk" of these foods fill and stretch the stomach, helping to stop food cravings and the desire to continue eating.

Interestingly, some research showed that eating carbohydrates resulted in strong ghrelin suppression at first. But after about 60 minutes, ghrelin rebounded with a vengeance, rising to an even higher level. Once the ghrelin rebounded, those who consumed carbohydrate-rich foods were even hungrier than before they had eaten!

In some studies, fat consumption on its own was pretty much neutral when it came to influencing either ghrelin or leptin, but it did provide a feeling of fullness or satiety. Other studies have shown that a high-fat diet did suppress ghrelin over the long term. Keep in mind, however, that protein and fat are very satiating in combination. (*J Clin Endocrinol Metab* 2008 May;93(5):1971–9) (*J Clin Endocrinol Metab* 2009 Nov;94(11):4463–71) (*Nutr Metab (Lond)* 2016 Jul;13:47) (*Am J Clin Nutr* 2006 Feb;83(2):211–20)

When leptin was discovered, researchers thought they had found the holy grail of weight loss. They assumed that obese individuals

must have lower levels of leptin, and by increasing leptin, excess weight would fall off. That wasn't the case. They discovered that a large percentage of obese and overweight individuals actually had very high levels, but much like happens with insulin, they had become resistant to leptin, which makes it more difficult to lose weight.

There are several causes of leptin resistance. Oftentimes, it develops in conjunction with insulin resistance. Chronically high levels of insulin negate the effects of leptin. It may also develop from the consumption of fructose in the form of high fructose corn syrup, which is so pervasive in our food supply. Other factors include the overconsumption of carbohydrates, lack of sleep, and stress.

With leptin resistance, the ability to signal the brain to stop eating is lost. Instead, the brain receives the message that the body is starving.

Overcoming leptin resistance requires doing many of the same things you would do to balance other hormones:

- **Avoid simple starches and sugars;**
- **Improve sleep habits;**
- **Lift weights and do high-intensity interval exercises;**
- **Don't eat before working out;**
- **Remove toxins from your diet and environment;**
- **Resolve stress (exercise, meditation, stretching, counseling, etc.);**
- **Include protein with every meal.**

There are also some foods that have been shown to help increase leptin levels or improve its activity. Omega-3 oils, like those found in salmon, sardines, flax and chia seeds, and walnuts are known

to reduce various inflammatory compounds. Some of those inflammatory compounds interfere with leptin's ability to suppress appetite. Foods rich in omega-3s (or omega-3 supplements) extinguish inflammation and help with weight loss.

Many of the health problems we're experiencing today stem from an imbalance of fatty acids. In our misguided efforts to reduce saturated fats from our diets, we've skewed our omega-6 to omega-3 ratio. Our food supply has become loaded with omega-6 fats in the form of vegetable oils. Not only are many omega-6 fats unstable, they damage mitochondria (the energy factories of each cell) and reduce respiration.

Green tea contains compounds that can be helpful as well. Not only do these compounds have a thermogenic effect (increasing basal metabolic rate), they work with another hormone called cholecystokinin, which augments the hunger suppression effects of leptin.

Where Do You Start?

Maintaining proper body weight and composition is an intricate, complex process that involves a multitude of factors. But this doesn't mean that it's an impossible goal to achieve.

Keep in mind that the human body is innately self-correcting and self-healing. It will lose excess weight and body fat if you give it the proper raw materials (nutrients) along with adequate exercise and rest. So where do you start?

First, you need to accept the fact that hormones are in control.

Nourish and work with the glands that produce these hormones.

Balance your hormones.

Check and take care of your thyroid, if needed. If you're a woman and have symptoms of estrogen dominance, that needs to be addressed too. If you're a man, make sure you are still producing adequate amounts of testosterone. Low testosterone used to only affect elderly men, but that's no longer the case. Xenoestrogens affect testosterone levels in men as young as their 30s!

Using the recommendations I gave throughout this article, start to "manipulate" the other hormones to work to your advantage when it comes to hunger, satiety, and weight loss.

Maintain proper bacterial balance. Start adding fermented vegetables to your diet and take a probiotic supplement every day. This will ensure the bacteria in your lower gut are the ones that help maintain lean body mass and reduce toxins and inflammation.

Change your diet. Eat as much lean protein and as many low-carbohydrate, high-fiber fruits as you want. There are obviously a lot of people who would argue that you could become fat from overeating anything. Personally, I have yet to see anyone become obese from eating too much grilled chicken and vegetables. On the flipside, I've seen thousands of people become overweight or obese by overeating sugars and carbs and having high-stress lifestyles.

Lean protein sources include salmon, catfish, turkey, pork tenderloin, steak, roast beef, bison, ground beef, sardines, chicken,

halibut, and Cornish game hen. You can also eat eggs, cottage cheese, plain (unsweetened) Greek yogurt, tofu, and jerky.

As for low-carbohydrate/high-fiber fruits, a short list would include raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, cantaloupe, avocados, pears, honeydew, star fruit, plums, clementines, oranges, peaches, apricots, and red grapefruit.

You can also consume unlimited amounts of non-starchy vegetables like artichoke, asparagus, green beans, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, collard greens, eggplant, onions, cucumbers, lettuce, celery, mushrooms, spinach, Swiss chard, rutabaga, turnips, cherry tomatoes, cauliflower, zucchini, bell peppers, Bok choy, radishes, watercress, and arugula.

Avoid sugar like the plague. And in the beginning, avoid starchy foods like breads, potatoes, tortillas, cereals, crackers, rice, oatmeal, grains in general, corn, legumes (peas, lentils, chickpeas, and beans), and bananas. If you have a craving for one of these, take a single bite or two with the rest of your meal...no more than that. Once you've achieved your ideal weight and diet, it may be possible to add 10 or 15 bites with one meal a day.

Finally, exercise and reduce stress. Do interval training and weightlifting, and practice meditation or any other stress-relieving technique that appeals to you.

Once your hormones have stabilized, you should begin to see a

gradual reduction in body fat (look for loss of inches, not pounds).

If the diet has curbed your hunger, reduced cravings, given you plenty of energy, and is easy to maintain, you're on the right track.

If you don't lose inches or body fat, then tweak your food intake or the type or amount of exercise you do. Adjust meal frequency or your fat and carbohydrate intake. Increase your consumption of foods that curb hunger. It may take a little detective work and you'll have to listen to your body, but you can get there.

Supplements That Help

Finally, I want to tell you about some nutritional supplements/extracts that can safely influence hormones. Oftentimes, taking these can help jump-start the weight loss process.

Appethyl is a patented extract from spinach. Compared to placebo, it has been shown to reduce hunger by 25 percent and cravings by 33 percent, improve satiety, and result in a 82 percent greater weight loss. (*Appetite* 2013 Sep;68:118-23) (*Scand J Gastroenterol* 2009;44(6):712-9)

SinetroL-XPur, a blend of citrus polyphenols, stimulates the release of fatty acids from fat cells to increase energy metabolism. In one recent study, individuals who took the compound for 12 weeks experienced a 3.61 percent reduction in body fat and lost 2.03 inches in their waist and 2.04 inches from their hips. In comparison, those in the placebo group lost 1.02 percent of their body fat, 0.56 inches in their waist, and 0.56

inches in their hips. (*Phytother Res* 2014;28(2):212-8)

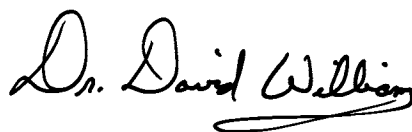
Lastly, research indicates that a combination of two plant extracts (Indian sphaeranthus and mango-steen) can increase fat metabolism to such a degree that those taking the extract combo lost five pounds and almost two inches from their waist after only two weeks. After eight weeks, they lost 12 pounds of body weight, almost five inches from the waist, and had a reduction in hip size by almost three inches.

The point I want to drive home is that when it comes to weight loss, the idea is not to start a calorie-deficient diet, but instead to follow a diet that curbs your hunger, reduces cravings, gives you plenty of energy, and is easy to maintain permanently. And you simply cannot underestimate the importance of hormone balance.

We all know people who never diet or who don't have a weight problem. Either through sheer luck or trial and error, they have found the right balance of hormones, diet, and exercise. You can do the same thing. Invest the time and effort necessary to figure out what your body needs and what combination of solutions discussed here work best to help you reach your goal.

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Wishing you and yours a wonderful, joyous, and healthy holiday season. See you in 2017!



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