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Weight it Out

A holistic guide to
managing lbs the right
way—no yo-yo dieting,
guaranteed

4 EATING HABITS FOR
WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

8 SIMPLE
LIFESTYLE SHIFTS

10 HEALTHY-METABOLISM
SUPPORT

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When it comes to weight loss, conventional wisdom just isn't up to par these days.

As it turns out, a calorie isn't a calorie. "Diet" foods are often anything but a solution to weight issues. And sweating it out at the gym isn't the lone prescription for perfect health we've been promised.

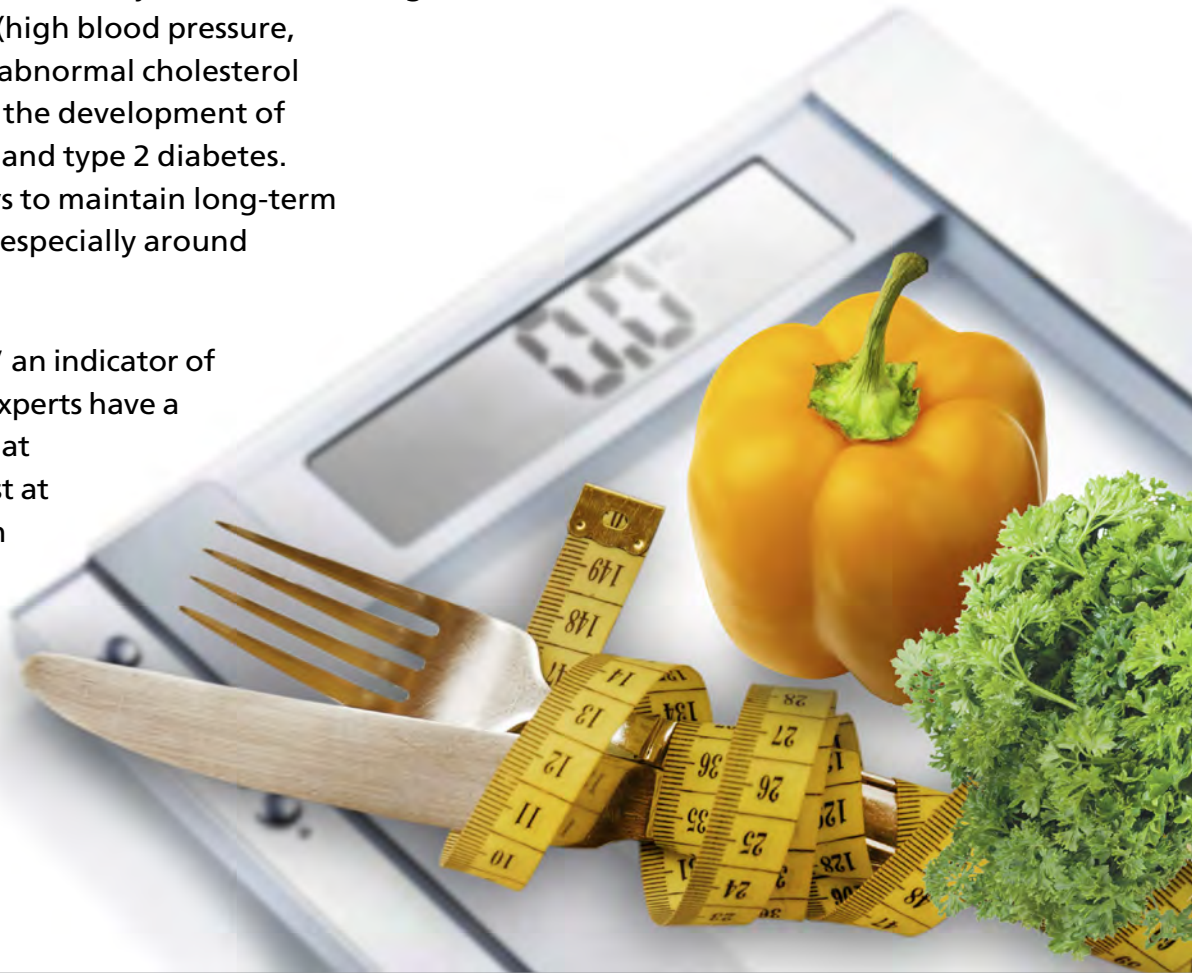
So what *do* today's experts say?

First of all, maintaining a healthy weight is as important to overall wellness as ever. Carrying around extra weight—in the form of a few extra pounds or obesity—ups the risk for everything from sleep issues to major heart concerns. Among these risks is metabolic syndrome, a cluster of symptoms (high blood pressure, high blood sugar, and abnormal cholesterol levels) associated with the development of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. One of the easiest ways to maintain long-term health: Zap excess fat, especially around the midsection.

Not only is "belly fat" an indicator of metabolic syndrome, experts have a pretty good idea of what measurements are most at risk. In general, women should try to keep their waist at 35 inches or less; men should aim for 40 inches or less.

Another way to monitor body fat is through your body mass index (BMI). There are lots of online calculators and charts out there to help you determine your BMI, which is calculated by comparing your height and weight. A healthy BMI falls between 18.5 and 24.9; overweight is up to 29.9; obese is over 30.

In the end, a healthy weight means more than confidence and comfort (though, those are definitely pluses). It's also a surefire way to keep energy up and health complications at bay. Here are expert tips and diet tweaks to help you get there.





Healthy eating habits for weight management

You know the drill: Eat less. Exercise more. Lose weight. Seems simple enough, right? “The conventional wisdom has been that there are no good foods or bad foods—that counting calories and eating everything in moderation is the answer. That’s a myth,” says Frank Hu, MD, PhD, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at Harvard School of Public Health. “Food can heavily influence the hormones and biological pathways that influence hunger, satiety, and fat accumulation, so you have to make wise choices.”

For the healthiest and most sustainable approach to weight management, you may want to ditch fad diets, which can have a yo-yo effect and don’t necessarily take into consideration your specific needs and preferences. Instead, opt for nutrient-dense whole foods and holistic eating habits.

The hormone connection

Toronto-based naturopath Natasha Turner, ND, author of *The Hormone Diet* (Rodale, 2009), explains that in a person with a healthy metabolism, hormones work in a complex symphony to assure you get enough to eat and use the fuel efficiently. The hormone ghrelin tells the brain that you’re hungry; its alter-ego leptin alerts you to put the fork down. When you eat carbohydrates, insulin floods the bloodstream, ushering glucose into muscle cells for fuel and locking any extra glucose into fat cells for later use. When you’re stressed, cortisol temporarily ignites a survival response, prompting you to crave high-calorie foods. Thyroid hormones influence your metabolism and how much energy you have, testosterone builds muscle and glucagon burns fat.

Unfortunately, age, menopause, chronic stress or poor diets tend to throw this fragile system into chaos. “I have people come in all the time and say these low-calorie diets that once worked for them just don’t work anymore,” says Jade Teta, ND, coauthor of *The Metabolic Effect Diet* (HarperCollins, 2010). For the hormonally imbalanced (well over half of American adults), slashing calories and hitting the treadmill can actually exacerbate the problem, raising stress hormones and thus boosting cravings and fueling more belly fat, even in otherwise thin people. The low-cal-and-cardio approach also lowers thyroid hormones, sapping energy and dropping metabolic rate, says Turner. The upshot: “If your hormones are out of whack, no diet plan will succeed.”

Nutritional steps to successful weight loss

* CHOOSE SMART CARBS (IN MODERATION)

When it comes to fat storage, insulin is the mother of all hormones. And since carbohydrates cause an overproduction of insulin in two-thirds of Americans, cutting carbs becomes essential to losing weight.

Start with a two-week period of sharp carb-cutting—aim for just 20 net grams per day, recommends Westman (net carbs = total carbs – fiber grams). Then, slowly ramp up to a maintenance level of 50 to 100 net grams (the younger and more active the person, the higher the amount). Load up on leafy greens and non-starchy vegetables, and steer clear of high-starch veggies like potatoes, corn, and beans. Keep your fruit intake to two servings a day, emphasizing high-fiber, lower-sugar options (berries, grapefruit, or apples).



* RELAX ABOUT FATS

Contrary to popular belief, recent studies have shown fat consumption does not significantly impact weight and, in some cases, hastens weight loss. For instance, in Hu's study, full-fat dairy products had no effect on weight, and nuts (high in monounsaturated fat) contributed to weight loss.

When you're building a hormone-balancing diet, Hu recommends fats from polyunsaturated sources (like fish) and monounsaturated sources (such as olive oil, avocado, nuts and seeds).



* EMPHASIZE LEAN PROTEIN

If insulin is the mother of fat storage, glucagon is the father of fat burning. One way to increase this hormone – and lose weight – is to eat more protein, says Teta.

But not all protein is created equal. In Hu's 2011 study, eating red meat was strongly associated with weight gain over four-year periods. And another study linked animal protein with increased mortality from cancer and cardiovascular disease, when compared with plant-based options.

Teta recommends going easy on beans and opting instead for lean poultry, fish, eggs and game meat. Vegans should consider adding rice, hemp or nut protein powder supplements to their diets.



* TIME YOUR INTAKE

Teta recommends eating within one hour of waking to avoid the stress-hormone surge that comes with low blood sugar. Always eat protein with breakfast to steady your insulin levels throughout the day. Eat every three hours to avoid low blood sugar, hunger and cravings. Try not to pair fats and starches in the same meal (skip the potatoes with your salmon and have broccoli instead).

And save the bulk of your carbohydrate intake for later in the day. One recent study found that subjects who ate the bulk of their carbohydrates at dinner experienced fewer cravings throughout the day, had better blood sugar balance, and lost more weight.



Yogurt for weight loss

A healthy food—but not one typically equated with weight loss—is top for keeping excess pounds in check. Yogurt trumps fruits, veggies and grains for weight loss, according to new research from *The New England Journal of Medicine* that followed weight patterns of 120,877 Americans. Though the reason isn't clear, prior research suggests unhealthy intestinal bacteria may increase inflammation, leading to weight gain, while yogurt's healthy probiotics have the opposite effect.



The organic link

Are you the type who always reaches a plateau where your weight won't budge anymore? Toxins could be to blame. Analysis published in *Obesity Reviews* found that pesticides (such as organochlorines used on grains, onions, and other crops, or that persist in the water or soil from banned pesticides like DDT) and polychlorinated biphenyls from industrial pollution—

both of which the body usually stores in fat tissue—get released during weight loss and then poison metabolism.

How? These toxins may reduce thyroid-hormone levels and interfere with the hormone's ability to rev up metabolism. They also inhibit fat burning and appetite control. To counter this effect, choose organic foods.

Control blood sugar through smart nutrition

Use these four simple steps to hit the healthy sugar sweet spot.



1.

EXPERT TIP: Maintain a healthy weight.

WHY? Insulin resistance and obesity go hand in hand.

HOW? Try to drop 10 pounds to start.



2.

EXPERT TIP: Limit white sugar + flour.

WHY? Simple sugars and carbs spike blood sugar.

HOW? Cut simple carbs and sugars found in pasta, potatoes, baked goods, juice and cereals.



3.

EXPERT TIP: Aim for five servings of fruits and veggies daily.

WHY? Fiber slows carbohydrate digestion and entry into the bloodstream by regulating blood sugar levels.

HOW? Reach for nutrient-dense options rather than starchy ones like corn and potatoes.



4.

EXPERT TIP: Up your fiber intake.

WHY? Fiber helps maintain an ideal body weight, and obesity is a risk factor for diabetes.

HOW? Easy! Stock up on whole grains, fruits and veggies.





Say goodbye to sugar

Americans devoured about 130 pounds of refined sugars per person in 2011, increasing risk of diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure—and making nutritionists cringe. That's because new research shows that a diet high in added sugars can not only lead to metabolic syndrome, but that when risk factors like overweight or impaired glucose tolerance are present, negative effects in other areas are more likely.

Here, experts explore sugar's effects on the body and offer real-life tips for cutting back.

EASE STRESS LEVELS.

Chronic stress exhausts the adrenal glands, which means they can't produce enough blood-sugar-spiking cortisol. The result is brain fog, lethargy ... and sugar cravings.



TAKE OMEGA-3s. Two or three servings each week of cold-water fish can protect the brain against fructose's effects, says Fernando Gomez-Pinilla, PhD, UCLA.



PROTECT YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM. Eating too much sugar (more than 6 teaspoons daily) can spur the release of cortisol which, in excess, can stimulate inflammation.



MAKE SMART SWAPS. Keep healthy, low-sugar options (like plain Greek yogurt with blueberries, or dark chocolate) on hand to satisfy a sweet tooth.

UNDERSTAND THE SUGAR-YEAST CONNECTION. Excess yeast feeds on sugar. The result? Chronic fatigue, muscle soreness and a tough time dropping pounds.



EAT SMALL SNACKS EVERY TWO TO THREE HOURS, says Holly Lucille, a Los Angeles-based ND. Protein, fiber and even fat slow sugar's release into the bloodstream.



REDUCE SALT INTAKE. Overindulging in salty foods often leads to sugar cravings. Limit salt to less than 200–250 mg per serving.



TRUST THE SCIENCE. UCLA researchers believe that sugar consumption can cause insulin and fructose to cross the blood-brain barrier, potentially leading to memory problems down the road.

VALUE VEGETABLE SUGARS.

Vegetables like tomatoes, onions and sweet potatoes contain natural sugars and ample fiber, which slows the sugar's release into the bloodstream.





Simple lifestyle shifts

Cater your workout

Are you hitting the treadmill but not dropping pounds? Beware: Too much cardio can spike muscle-eating stress hormones, like cortisol, and hinder thyroid hormones, leading to fatigue and slowed metabolic rate (the rate at which you burn calories at rest), says Turner. Plus, long, moderate-intensity aerobic workouts tend to lower levels of the satiating hormone leptin, making you ravenous afterward, says Jade Teta, ND.

In contrast, both experts say, strength training along with short, intense cardio sessions stimulates fat-burning hormones like testosterone and human growth hormone, bolstering metabolism.

Try 30- to 45-minute workouts three times weekly, combining intervals (cardio bursts punctuated by brief rests) and strength training. On “off” days, walk for 30 to 60 minute.

More Zs < lbs

The less you sleep, the more you may weigh. Stanford University School of Medicine researchers found that regular sleep loss is linked to elevated amounts of ghrelin, a hormone that triggers appetite, and reduced leptin, a hormone that tells your body when it's full. The study showed that just five hours of sleep—well below the recommended standard of eight hours—is associated with a higher body mass

index. And the benefits don't end there. Deep slumber also boosts melatonin and stimulates growth hormones, which help skin, bone and muscle regeneration and cut down belly fat. The prescription to a great night's sleep: no fewer than seven hours nightly in a pitch-black room between 68 to 70 degrees. Can't get to sleep? GABA, magnesium and melatonin supplements can help.





Conquering belly fat

Whether it's fat found just beneath the skin (subcutaneous) or between inner organs (visceral), extra weight around the middle has serious health implications. According to the Mayo Clinic, boasting an "apple shaped" body is a potential indicator of metabolic syndrome, and increases a person's risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Here are expert tips on how to shed inches off your waistline for long-term health.

- ✱ **BURN BELLY FAT.** Interval training—spending between 10 percent and 20 percent of cardio time on high-intensity bursts—burns visceral fat, says Kathy Smith, instructor, *Ageless with Kathy Smith* (Acacia, 2011).
- ✱ **STRENGTHEN THE CORE.** Muscles between your ribs and pelvis support the abdomen, keep you upright and maintain a flat stomach. Planks and crunches can keep these muscles strong.
- ✱ **STAY REGULAR WITH SOLUBLE FIBER.** Constipation can prevent abdominal muscles from properly receiving electrical impulses and decreases exercise's effectiveness.
- ✱ **BALANCE METABOLISM WITH DIET.** Eat five or six small, whole-food meals a day to avoid "starvation mode" – when metabolism slows and fat-cell production increases.
- ✱ **FOCUS ON PORTIONS.** A healthy plate is comprised of half non-starchy veggies, one-fourth lean protein and one-fourth complex carbohydrates.
- ✱ **CHOOSE HELPFUL SUPPLEMENTS.** Boost metabolism with nettle tea, digestive enzymes or chlorella, says Keren Gilbert, RD, founder and president of Decision Nutrition.
- ✱ **SUPPORT HORMONES.** Keep weighty hormones balanced by avoiding artificial sweeteners and hydrogenated oils; eating protein, fiber and healthy fats; and avoiding excessive weightlifting, which can increase production of cortisol – and belly fat – says Turner, author of *The Hormone Diet*.
- ✱ **LISTEN TO YOUR LIVER.** Excess estrogen can cause belly fat in men and women. Optimize liver function and keep estrogen levels in check with turmeric, calcium D-glucarate, magnesium, fiber and B vitamins, says Turner.



Focusing on solutions

Almost one in three kids are overweight or obese, placing them at a significantly greater risk for heart disease, asthma, certain cancers and type 2 diabetes, as well as psychological issues including low self-esteem and depression. Luckily, both local and national initiatives are helping to create healthy solutions for kids now—to decrease their risk of disease down the road.

"It's not that kids don't like eating fruits and vegetables," says Allison Sosna, founder of MicroGreens, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit after-school program that teaches children and teens how to cook low-cost meals. "The problem occurs when the adult who's at home doesn't know how to budget or how to cook properly."

After partnering with schools, MicroGreens hosts eight-week cooking classes to transform the way kids regard food—empowering them to shop for and prepare nourishing dishes that can feed four people, such as Herb Chicken Soup and Italian Pork Ragout. The kicker? The ingredients for each family-sized meal cost around \$3.50 in total.

A fat that burns calories?

It may sound ... unsightly ... but the key to burning calories and even losing weight might be something called brown fat. Unlike white fat cells, which store calories, the brown stuff burns energy and produces heat. Research published in 2012 showed that a hormone (irisin) released in response to exercise can turn white fat cells into brown fat. And now, researchers are finding that spending time in the cold can activate brown fat and even cause new cells to grow. How? Feeling cold activates the brown fat, and it then fuels itself in part by taking fat from the rest of the body. How cool.

Proven ingredients to support healthy metabolism

It's clear that maintaining a healthy weight is vital to overall wellness. And while a nutritious diet is one surefire way to get there, there are a bounty of supplements on the market to assist in a healthy eating plan.



New research shows curcuminoids (active compounds in turmeric shown to decrease arterial plaque and modify lipids for heart health) can help manage LDL (bad) cholesterol and total cholesterol in individuals with metabolic syndrome. Researchers enlisted 50 individuals with metabolic syndrome to take 1000 mg per day of curcuminoids with BioPerine extract; the same number of individuals took a placebo. At the end of eight weeks, it became clear that the curcumin was found to be effective in managing total cholesterol and LDL in people with metabolic



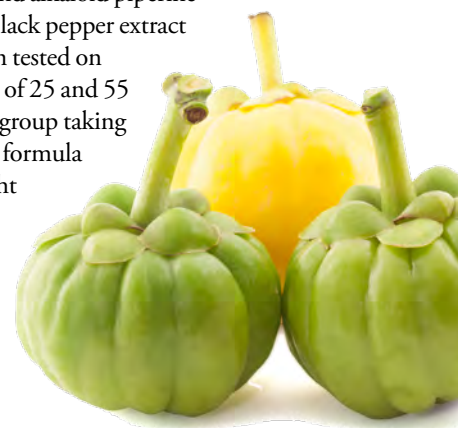
syndrome. Another study, published in 2015, enlisted 117 subjects with metabolic syndrome. Researchers randomly assigned participants a curcuminoid treatment or placebo for eight weeks. At the end of the study, researchers found that the curcuminoids significantly improved the oxidative and inflammatory status in individuals with metabolic syndrome, as evidenced by its ability to lower c-reactive protein concentrations.

Forskolin, a phytochemical found in the roots of the *Coleus forskohlii* plant, has been used since ancient times to treat heart disorders like high blood pressure and chest pain, but today's research shows that forskolin can actually alter body composition in the treatment of obesity. Researchers enlisted 30 overweight or obese men, and treated them with either forskolin or a placebo for 12 weeks. At the end of the treatment period, those who took the forskolin presented with significantly decreased body fat percentages and fat mass. Additionally, they also had a significant increase in lean body mass.

A similar study was performed on women, in which mildly overweight females supplemented their diet with the ingredient or placebo. At the end of 12 weeks, researchers found that the supplemented group not only had less weight gain, but they also reported less fatigue, hunger and fullness. Their conclusion? Even if forskolin doesn't cause weight loss, it may help support healthy weight management.



HCA is derived from the rind of the *Garcinia cambogia* fruit, and has been making headlines recently for its ability to assist in weight loss. One study combined HCA with garcinol, forskolin and alkaloid piperine (black pepper extract), and this patented black pepper extract (containing piperine, an alkaloid) was then tested on male and female subjects between the ages of 25 and 55 for 12 weeks. At the end of treatment, the group taking 500 mg of the herbal weight management formula demonstrated 7.5 percent total body weight loss. The placebo group clocked in at only 1.1 percent loss, which researchers attributed to the exercise and diet regimen. This shows how supplementation can enhance the effect of exercise and diet in garnering healthy, lean muscle mass.



GarCitrin is a patented product combining the weight management benefits of HCA. This amphoteric extract shows improved results over the regular HCA by enhancing the benefits of garcinia extract in promoting fat oxidation. GarCitrin has been shown to promote fat loss; and by replenishing the glycogen in the liver, it is able to incite a sense of satiety.