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taste for life



women's WELLNESS

NATURAL STRATEGIES
FOR STAYING STRONG
AND HEALTHY

gluten free
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BEST FOODS AND SUPPLEMENTS FOR BONES
MAXIMIZING METABOLISM • A GLUTEN-FREE FEAST

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preserving

METABOLIC HEALTH

an integrative approach to better energy and a healthy weight

From a health standpoint, sometimes we're our own worst enemies. We eat too many processed foods, exercise too little, and deal with stress in less-than-optimal ways. We tend to favor short-term rewards and ignore long-term consequences. ▶



Results of these modern habits manifest themselves in today's health epidemics, including metabolic syndrome and its uncontrolled offspring, Type 2 diabetes. These conditions are often a function of obesity related to unhealthy diet and lack of exercise. As people gain weight, their cells can lose the ability to take in blood sugar (glucose). Excess glucose in the bloodstream damages organs and tissues and wreaks havoc throughout the body. It's particularly bad for pancreatic beta cells, which produce the insulin that allows cells to absorb glucose. The pancreas works harder to overcome this resistance and eventually burns out, causing insulin resistance—a primary feature of Type 2 diabetes and a significant factor in obesity. Even low-grade glucose and insulin resistance can impede weight loss unless we take the right measures.

The good news is, once we make progress with the right diet, exercise, and supplement program, we start to feel better: We have more energy, vitality, and mental clarity.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT— AND WHAT YOU DON'T EAT

The common approach to weight loss and metabolic health is to eat less and exercise more. But for metabolic health, we also need to pay close attention to what we eat. Certain foods—especially those that increase inflammation—are triggers for weight gain, even in small quantities. For example, high fructose corn syrup may cause weight gain, regardless of caloric intake. Refined sugar is also very problematic, as it fuels chronic inflammation which can disrupt glucose metabolism.

The glycemic index is a helpful tool that measures how long it takes

the body to break specific foods down into glucose. Low glycemic index foods are metabolized more slowly, preventing the blood sugar spikes that can occur with high glycemic/high sugar foods. The trouble with these insulin spikes is that they are often followed by a crash—and cravings.

In particular, avoid refined sugar and highly processed grains such as those found in pastas, breads, and other simple carbohydrate foods, as they have been shown to produce the highest glucose spikes.

Good choices of metabolism-boosting foods are high-fiber vegetables, sea vegetables, uncooked leafy vegetables, sprouted whole grains, legumes, high-quality protein, and moderate amounts of healthy fats. These nutrient-dense foods deeply nourish you, balance blood glucose and metabolism, and increase energy reserves.

Other foods are also known to boost metabolism. For example, research has shown that piperine, a component in black pepper, helps the body metabolize fat more efficiently. Fish oil has been shown to increase metabolism. Whey protein concentrate helps to build muscle mass, boost metabolism, and support detoxification.

GET MOVING

Exercise helps the body function more efficiently on every level, including metabolism. One important benefit of exercise is that it helps control the stress hormone cortisol. Chronic cortisol release can throw the body's delicate metabolic systems out of balance and feed weight gain, not to mention other chronic health conditions.

Regular exercise coupled with good nutrition works to increase insulin sensitivity and balance

blood glucose to help fine tune metabolism. To maximize these effects, aim for a balanced workout. In addition to light cardio, include anabolic exercises, such as weight lifting and resistance. Add in isotonic routines, such as yoga and stretches, which will strengthen muscles, relax the stress response, and reduce inflammation.

HELPFUL HERBS

There are a variety of natural ingredients that support both efficient metabolism and healthy digestion. In my clinical practice, I recommend a formula that contains Chinese herbs such as kudzu root and Chinese yam, organic medicinal mushrooms, alginates from kelp, and alpha lipoic acid. This formula supports glucose, carbohydrate, and fat metabolism and reduces sugar cravings.

I also recommend a digestive formula that includes digestive enzymes, medicinal mushrooms, zinc, chromium, pepper, fruit, and other botanicals. This blend supports digestion, immunity, and a healthy metabolism.

Ultimately, this isn't about going on a crash diet or joining an exercise boot camp. To achieve lifelong metabolic health, you need to maintain a sustainable lifestyle that will promote a strong, efficient metabolism for healthy weight and overall disease prevention. Think of it in terms of small adjustments: an apple instead of a doughnut; taking the stairs over the elevator; adding supplements that will accelerate your metabolism and reduce cravings. As your metabolism gains momentum, you can make greater strides toward the next level of optimal vitality, energy, and well-being. 🍏🍌



THE STRESS/ WEIGHT CONNECTION

Healthy stress reduction is an important component of an integrative metabolic strategy. High levels of stress increase stress hormones, including cortisol, and can also spike insulin.

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"In Vivo Antioxidative Activity of a Quantified *Pueraria Lobata* Root Extract" by L. Bebrevska et al., *J Ethnopharmacol*, 1/10 ■ "A Low Glycemic Diet Lifestyle Intervention Improves Fat Utilization During Exercise in Older Obese Humans" by T.P. Solomon et al., *Obesity*, 3/13 ■ "Nine Months of Combined Training Improves Ex Vivo Skeletal Muscle Metabolism in Individuals with Type 2 Diabetes" by L.M. Sparks et al., *J Clin Endocrinol Metab*, 3/13 ■ "Piperine, an LXRA Antagonist, Protects Against Hepatic Steatosis and Improves Insulin Signaling in Mice Fed a High-fat Diet" by H. Iwa *Biochem Pharmacol*, 12/12

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