

# *The* HORMONE – BRAIN – WEIGHT *Connection*

Dear Friends:

I have been seriously & diligently researching and working on a diet/nutritional plan that REALLY WORKS for the past 5 years.

I have been interested in this field since I was 22 years old and a “boyfriend” called me “chunky”. Believe me, he was no friend. I embarked on a series of brutal dieting for the next 8 years. I tried high protein, counting carbs, eliminating fat, the cabbage soup diet, the Stillman diet, the Atkins diet and on and on. Guess what? I did lose weight, but I was always miserable, tired, and hungry and I lost my JOY! Now, I have my weight where I want it, but I have never forgotten those years and I do not want YOU to suffer like I did.

In my mission to help women with hormone balance, I have talked to over 100,000 women. Weight is a big concern and struggle for SO many of you. I have good news for you! I have discovered the MOST important link... **THE BRAIN!**

There is a direct connection between the **hormones, brain & weight.**

In the past year I have helped many men & women lose weight while retaining their sense of balance and JOY! Including my own husband who just lost 33 pounds and feels WONDERFUL!

So...my dear friends. I have developed this plan for you. Read through it and see what works for you. And, remember.....I am here to be your dieting friend. You can call me anytime!

With Love,

*Barbara Hoffman*

# *The* **HORMONE – BRAIN – WEIGHT** *Connection*

## **HORMONES ARE KEY!**

**Unless they are balanced, no diet will truly work!**

- Hormonal imbalance leads to weight gain
- Foods cannot help you with hormone balance; You need the actual hormones, especially progesterone

**Metabolism & Hormones: When hormones decline in menopause, metabolism declines about 10-20%. That is about 200 calories per day less that we can eat. If not, we accumulate body fat.!**

### **MUFFIN TOP SYNDROME:**

You look down at your waist and see a POOCH. Some “pooch” is okay. It is probably God’s plan for us to have a little extra weight around the middle as we get older, however...

### **Why do we get the BIG pooch?**

- 1) Estrogen Dominance: A hormone imbalance that can be corrected by natural progesterone.
- 2) Insulin Resistance: Your body is not reacting to insulin, so your brain is signaled to make more. You become constantly hungry AND you store fat.
- 3) High stress: Numerous cortisol receptor sites exist around the midsection. Adipose tissue has 4 times more receptor sites than the rest of the body. Stress raises cortisol levels, so fat accumulates there when stress hormones dominate your hormone profile. Progesterone can help counteract this!

Note: Insulin Resistance and High Cortisol are related. High Cortisol causes a decrease in insulin sensitivity.

### **What hormones do you need for weight loss?**

- **Progesterone: 40 – 80 mg. daily**
- **DHEA: 10 – 20 mg. daily**
- **Pregnenolone: 50 mg. daily**
- **Testosterone (can be raised by taking DHEA which I find preferable to actual testosterone)**
- **Also, your thyroid needs to be working at optimal level so get some thyroid support if you need it.**

## “BRAINLESS” DIETING DOES NOT WORK!

When you restrict calories, your body adjusts accordingly. Your metabolism slows! If you work on brain chemistry PLUS your eating habits, you will lose weight because your metabolism will stay strong.

“Will Power” is not the answer! “**Brain Power**” is the answer. Your brain is “command central” when it comes to weight loss. The brain needs certain nutrients and if it does not get those nutrients, it automatically sends out a hunger signal that results in you OVER-EATING!

**THE SOLUTION: TAKE HORMONES AND NOURISH YOUR BRAIN.  
THIS IS THE WAY TO WEIGHT LOSS!**

### WHAT ARE THE 3 BRAIN CHEMICALS THAT WILL HELP YOU LOSE WEIGHT?

#### 1. **DOPAMINE** – a natural amphetamine. Raise levels, RAISE METABOLISM!

- Dopamine “kick-starts” your metabolism
- When you have a low metabolism, food automatically accumulates as body fat
- Good dopamine levels allow you to experience one helping of a food and then walk away
- Dopamine MAKES YOU FEEL SATISFIED. Your body gets the message that you are full
- Dopamine cuts cravings for sugar
- You will feel FOCUSED

#### LOW DOPAMINE LEVELS = WEIGHT GAIN DESPITE YOUR BEST EFFORTS

##### Low dopamine symptoms:

- you need more food than a normal person needs to feel “satisfied”
- you often wake up tired
- your energy spikes after eating...so you constantly snack
- you crave simple carbs (Cakes, crackers, chips, pasta, pastries, potatoes, white breads & rice)

#### LOW DOPAMINE = HIGH CORTISOL = BELLY FAT

##### When Dopamine is low:

- Brain turns to cortisol for energy. When excess cortisol is released, you get puffy and appetite increases. You get bloated and gain weight around the middle because cortisol receptors are located there
- Cortisol increases adrenaline... This makes you feel restless, anxious...not able to sleep at night. Lack of sleep prevents your brain from keeping hormones at right levels so your hormones are unbalanced and YOU GAIN WEIGHT

- Anxiety causes you to crave comfort foods. You might feel “addicted” to certain foods

**GOOD NEWS:** Food addictions are reversed when you give your brain the proper nutrients.

## **CUT SUGAR OUT of your diet!    SUGAR DEPLETES DOPAMINE**

### Use Stevia instead of sugar

- It has NO calories and is 200-300 times sweeter than sugar.
- Stevia is Natural; it comes from a plant in Brazil.
- It is a dietary supplement and is found in health food stores.

**By the way, to calculate how much sugar is in a particular food, look at the label and find the grams of sugar...Take those grams, divide by 4. The number you get is number of TEASPOONS OF SUGAR you are ingesting! Wow! This can be shocking & should help you resist high sugar foods.**

**Keep your Dopamine High**  
“Get off sugar for your vanity and your sanity!”  
Sugar is not a food, but a drug!

## **TO INCREASE DOPAMINE NATURALLY**

Consume amino acids (specifically phenylalanine & tyrosine) found in protein rich meats, poultry, fish, & many vegetables, especially:

- Beef (get lean cuts), chicken, cottage cheese, eggs, oat flakes, pork

**By the Way:** a single serving of cottage cheese ½ cup greatly increases tyrosine which increases dopamine. Try adding some spices. Personally, I like to add chili powder and turmeric.

## **BOOST YOUR METABOLISM WITH:**

### **SPICES**

Spices provide many nutrients & antioxidants. Spicy food is better metabolized. Add spices....you will burn calories at a higher rate.

### **COFFEE**

- Coffee is an antioxidant; it facilitates weight loss because it is a diuretic
- It contains soluble dietary fiber – loosens bowels, prevents constipation
- Improves short term memory
- Is not unhealthy. Research shows 2-4 cups per day (small cups) is fine

### **TEA**

- Contains L-Theanine which is a relaxant

- Enhances metabolism. Helps burn calories & body fat. That is why so many diet products on the market contain green tea. You can make your own “diet” product. Steep 2 green tea bags and 2 black tea bags. Put the tea in a thermos and sip all day.

### **SUPPLEMENTS TO ENHANCE DOPAMINE:**

- **Folic Acid – increases amount of calories burned (400 – 800 mg)**
- **Phosphatidyl Serine – increases dopamine, lowers cortisol (200 mg)**
- **Rhodiola rosea (500 mg)**
- **L-Tyrosine – stimulates body to burn up adipose tissue, promotes satiety (500 – 1000 mg)**
- **Vitamin D – controls metabolic syndrome (1000 – 2000 IU)**

## **2. SEROTONIN – MAKES US FEEL SERENE, REFRESHED, HAPPY HELPS CONTROL CRAVINGS!**

### **Causes of Low Serotonin:**

- Hormone imbalance (low progesterone)
- Environmental toxins
- Stress-eats up serotonin
- Lack of sleep
- Lack of sun
- Prescription drugs

### **LOW SEROTONIN SYMPTOMS:**

- You will want carbs with every meal
- You crave salty snacks ( pickles, olives)
- You crave chocolate
- Cravings get worse around time of menstrual cycle
- You get up and eat in the middle of the night
- You have no appetite in the morning
- Overeating at night.
- You consume fewer calories during day, but at night you raid the refrigerator. You are especially looking for high carb snacks
- During the menstrual cycle, body needs more serotonin...You are now especially vulnerable to cravings
- Panic attacks
- Sad, depressed mood
- You think about food all the time
- Muscle stiffness, weakness

- Reduced interest in sex

#### **FOODS THAT INCREASE SEROTONIN LEVELS:**

Avocado, chicken, cottage cheese, eggs, yogurt, turkey and wheat germ.

#### **SPICES THAT INCREASE SEROTONIN LEVELS:** saffron, nutmeg, and turmeric

Also, cinnamon, spearmint, dill.....these are natural anti-depressants

Put cinnamon in your tea! – It can reduce cravings for carbs.

#### **SUPPLEMENTS TO ENHANCE SEROTONIN:**

- **Vitamin D – elevates mood, causes body to burn fat. Take in a.m. (2000 – 4000 IU)**
- **Melatonin – take at night. Suppresses body weight and visceral fat accumulation the next day (1.2 – 9 mg)**
- **5-HTP – take at night, reduces appetite, promotes weight loss (50 – 100 mg)**
- **DHEA – helps burn off belly fat (women: 5 – 20 mg men: 10 – 50 mg)**
- **SAM-e – may help raise serotonin levels & reduce food cravings (400 mg)**

#### **SEROTONIN-ENHANCING HORMONES:**

- **Progesterone: 40 – 80 mg per day**
- **Pregnenolone: 50 mg per day**
- **HGH: available through prescription only**

### **3. GABA (Gamma-Aminobutyric acid) - Promotes Calm Stable Brain Chemistry**

- the brain's calming agent
- helps maintain the proper brain rhythm; keeps brain signals flowing in a calm, steady stream versus shaky "pulses"
- keeps you feeling balanced (not tense, irritable, hungry)
- counteracts emotional eating
- gives control over that lead impulse to overeating. No more eating in order to control feelings of panic.

#### **ARE YOU GABA DEFICIENT?**

- You have a second helping at every meal
- You binge at a buffet or you can eat a box of cookies in one sitting
- You eat off someone else's plate mindlessly
- You always order dessert just because it is there

*These are signs of a GABA deficiency!*

#### **BENEFITS OF TAKING GABA FOR WEIGHT CONTROL:**

- Stops stressful eating
- Helps with portion control, over-eating

- Cuts cravings for alcohol/drugs, junk food binges
- Cuts cravings due to anxiety
- Can also help migraines, panic attacks, insomnia

GABA is available as a nutritional supplement. Take 550 mg daily. With GABA you can become one of these people you see eating leisurely and laying down their fork without finishing every morsel on their plate. How wonderful! You are under control!

My favorite product is ZenMind (GABA mixed with L-theanine)

**IN SUMMARY, HERE IS WHAT YOU MAY NEED:**

- 1. Dopamine:** for energy & metabolism
- 2. Serotonin:** for a calm & restful brain and eliminating cravings for carbs & salty foods
- 3. GABA:** for obsessive/anxious eating patterns & to help you develop portion control

**Self-Test**

Let's pinpoint your needs for your weight loss success.

Note: You may need more than 1 brain supplement.

**IS THIS YOU?**

1) I need energy. I am consuming excessive amounts of coffee and sugar to get going and keep going during the day.

**You need DOPAMINE**  
 Eat more protein  
**L-Tyrosine** is good for you

2) I binge. I over-eat. I have no portion control. I feel addicted to some foods. When I'm stressed I eat whatever will calm me down. I don't feel like my brain ever tells me to stop eating.

**You need GABA**  
 Also, drink green tea (2-4 cups) for calmness, attention, & focus.  
 Decrease caffeine, eat complex carbs & high fiber foods.  
**Zen Mind** is great for you!

3) I often crave salty foods. I am not hungry in the morning, but I can eat all night long. I look for high carb snacks. I get up at night to snack. I eat small snacks, but many of them. I have trouble falling asleep at night.

**You need SEROTONIN**  
 Eat foods high in tryptophan (the precursor to serotonin)  
 Use spices in abundance  
**5-HTP** is especially good for you!

## WEIGHT LOSS & SLEEP

**YOU NEED SLEEP to help you lose weight. How & Why?**

- You need 7-8 hours of restful sleep.
- You need a 90 min cycle to reach restorative phase: this phase promotes release of neuro-chemicals.
- Proper sleep resets hormones.
- Sleep helps increase metabolism
- Sleep lowers cortisol levels – discourages belly fat accumulation and insulin resistance

**The more tired you are, the heavier you will get.**

Sleep influences the hormones that regulate satiety and hunger...ghrelin & leptin. The levels of both these hormones fall when you are sleep deprived.

**Too little sleep translates to hunger, cravings and the feeling of being fully satisfied.** The centers in the brain for sleep, sex, thirst, hunger are related. So if you have cravings you may be thirsty – try drinking something sugarless.

Also...**growth hormone declines with sleep deprivation.** One week of poor sleep inhibits growth hormone. HGH controls the body's proportion of muscle & fat.

### IMPORTANT TO YOUR WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAM

You need 5 cycles of sleep each night. Each cycle takes 90 minutes. 5 x 90 minutes = 7 ½ hours. To determine your bedtime, take the time you need to be up in the morning and count back 7 ½ hours. Then go to sleep at that hour. This can help you lose weight!

#### Breakfast:

Do NOT eat cold cereal, toast or a bagel alone with no protein. It gives a temporary surge of energy because they are carbs. However, they do nothing in the long run to kick up your metabolism & will most likely be turned into body fat. You need protein in the morning! Here are a few suggestions:

- Sliced turkey with swiss cheese as a wrap with a little mayo
- 2 hard boiled eggs made into an egg salad with a slice of wheat bread
- Whole grain toast with peanut butter or almond butter
- Oatmeal mixed with 1-2 tablespoons protein powder

**For more suggestions you might be interested in THE GOOD MOOD DIET that I wrote.**

#### A TIP FOR CRAVINGS

If you experience cravings, try this:

Eat 6 walnut halves OR ½ oz chocolate (not both, ha ha)

These foods trigger your brain that “I am no longer hungry” via the vagus nerve.

It really works!



## **AN IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT OVER-EATING**

Your stomach is about the size of a 6 ounce can. If you enlarge it with a huge meal, it takes **6 weeks of small meals** to return the stomach to normal size! Yikes....now you know what that Thanksgiving dinner can really do! Be Careful!

## **A NOTE ABOUT EXERCISE**

A recent study released about exercise followed 3 groups of people:

**Group 1** Worked with a trainer for six months

**Group 2** Did other miscellaneous exercises like lifting free weights, running, treadmill, etc.

**Group 3** Did no particular exercise

### **Results:**

- The trainer group lost only slightly more than the no exercise group
- The miscellaneous exercise group actually gained weight. They noticed they ate more!

Another study divided dieters into 2 groups:

**Group 1** Dieted only

**Group 2** Dieted and exercised 45 minutes 3-5 days/week

The difference was only a couple of pounds. See below:

**Diet only group lost 5 – 37 pounds.  
Exercise/Diet group lost 8 – 39 pounds.**

**A compilation of over 43 studies have shown that exercise is not an effective weight loss tool. (Of course it is important to your overall health, but walking is fine.**

**To lose weight the rule of thumb as it stands is EAT LESS, EXERCISE MORE  
WHAT YOU SHOULD REALLY DO IS, EAT BETTER & WALK!** Walking is great because it gets you into a more healthful mood and it won't make you more hungry!

## **CONCLUSION**

Weight loss is not about "will power." If it was, all of you magnificent women who are out there and those who call my office every day would not be struggling with this problem. Your brain chemistry & hormones need to be optimized so that your body will have a natural ability to:

- **Eliminate cravings**
- **Control your appetite**
- **Stay motivated because you feel good**
- **Have a calm, happy, and balanced mood**
- **Eliminate feelings of stress and deprivation**

This strategy really works! Please let me know of your progress. Call me if you have questions as you are going along. I want to help you!

Your Friend,

*Barbara Hoffman*