

ARE YOU EXERCISING, EATING WELL AND STILL CAN'T LOSE THE WEIGHT??

Eating a diet that would make a Biafran hungry, exercising regularly but the weight comes off at a snail's pace or worse, plateaus?

This is a commonly encountered issue and some questions you may ask yourself are:

1. Are your hormones out of balance?
2. Is toxicity a factor?
3. Are you nutrient deficient?
4. Are you experiencing inflammation or allergies?
5. Is the exercise I'm doing right for me?

We will go through these issues one by one and explain how they adversely affect weight loss.

1) Hormones

Low thyroid function, insulin resistance, and stress can adversely affect our weight loss attempts.

- a) **Thyroid:** Symptoms of low thyroid function include putting on weight, low energy, sluggish bowels, feeling chilly, and issues with fertility and increased miscarriage risk. A simple at home test is to check your oral temperature in the morning before rising. If you are menstruating, do this in the first half of your cycle (e.g. between days 5-10 after the first day of your period). If you are male or menopausal, do this any day, so long as it is before rising. If it is lower than 36.4C, it is possible you have sluggish thyroid function. A simple blood test via your GP – called a thyroid function test, is a screening test for thyroid imbalance.
- b) **Insulin resistance:** When someone has Type 1 diabetes (also referred to as insulin dependent or juvenile diabetes), their pancreas does not secrete sufficient insulin to make the glucose in our blood get into the cells. So the treatment is use of insulin to regulate blood sugar levels. In contrast, when we have a genetic predisposition or are carrying extra weight, often our insulin levels are fine or even high, but our body becomes resistant to it, and glucose does not get used effectively. This has a multitude of adverse effects including the “spare tyre” around our waist line, low energy levels and cravings for carbohydrates especially sugar. Nutrients and dietary manipulation can assist here, especially keeping the carbohydrates low and ensuring adequate amounts of good quality protein and healthy fats are consumed.
- c) **Stress:** When we are stressed (emotionally, physically or nutritionally), we secrete high levels of a hormone from our adrenals called cortisol. This causes our body to store fat, especially around the middle.
- d) **Satiety hormones:** Ghrelin (a hormone that makes us hungry), serotonin (The feel good hormone that affects carbohydrate cravings), and others like leptin and CCK can be out of balance, and will be explained in more detail in next month article.

- 2) Toxicity:** Heavy metals, “xeno-oestrogens” (fake oestrogens from plastics such as bisphenol A, phthalates and pesticides,) can hamper effective thyroid and liver function.

A hair analysis can detect heavy metal levels as well as the balance of good minerals, and can be ordered through your health practitioner. Ensuring your water bottles are free of phthalates, plasticizers and bisphenol A is a proactive choice, as is using microwave safe containers (or a plate or not using the microwave at all).

Gut toxicity is when the balance of good bacteria (probiotics) are outnumbered by harmful bacteria or yeast. Symptoms can include bloating, constipation and/or diarrhoea, bad breath and flatulence. A “gut toxicity test” (done by some naturopaths), or a comprehensive stool analysis (ordered through your health professional) can diagnose the harmful bugs and treatment to rid yourself of them.

- 3) Nutrients:** Some essential nutrients to ensure efficient metabolism includes
- a) Essential fatty acids, especially omega 3s (EPA and DHA that are present in fish oils). They increase fat burning, and decrease fat synthesis.
 - b) Iodine – often deficient in our soils and on the many who shun salt and dairy products. Sources include iodised salt, seaweed and seafood. A urine test can detect iodine deficiency.
 - c) Magnesium – do you experience flickering eyelids, cramps, headaches or chocolate cravings? Magnesium is involved with insulin resistance, healthy thyroid function, and a large percentage of the population have low levels of this important nutrient.
 - d) Chromium – deficiency symptoms include sugar cravings and variation in blood sugar regulation e.g. hypoglycaemia symptoms (low blood sugar levels). Sources include yeast, liver, molasses and egg yolk, and is available in supplements.