

An Age Old Problem

I am a nutritionist in Austin, Texas. The other day someone posed an interesting question. If the American population is cutting down on fat, why are we getting fatter? And why does this population seem to be all round bigger than ever before? One theory is something called "metabolic obesity". As the baby boom generation increases in age, so it seems, does their waistline. Have you ever heard someone say, "Gee, I don't get it, I've eaten this way all my life and never gained weight, now I just look at food and I get fat!" That's because metabolic imbalance is not an over night thing. We have discovered that it may not be the fat in the food that's making us fat but more likely the carbohydrates. Especially the huge consumption of refined sugar and highly processed refined foods, as well as the intake of bad fats (i.e. hydrogenated fats) in the standard American diet. These foods are basically devoid of nutrients, as well as being high glycemic and insulin producing.

We know that insulin is a fat storing hormone and that years and years of consuming these foods causes the pancreas to overproduce insulin. To compound the problem, most people do think that fat in the diet is the problem, so we have become a fat-phobic society. Consequently thinking that all fats are bad and eliminating the important essential fatty acids needed in the diet to help keep our metabolism balanced and free of unwanted fats. "Fat free" this and "non-fat" that is being consumed in ridiculous quantities. However, the consumer doesn't understand that in order to make these fat free products taste good they must increase the amount of carbohydrates and simple sugars. When you consume even a few carbohydrates, like a candy bar, your blood insulin concentration is increased up to 10-fold within a few minutes. In the Textbook of Medical Physiology, it states the insulin levels will reach 10 to 25 times above normal to get rid of excess glucose (blood sugar), and continue to stay elevated even 2 to 3 hours after the time the carbohydrates are eaten. Now, unless you are a marathon runner you don't use that excess glucose so the body first stores it as glycogen, then when that is not used, it converts it to body fat. The notion that fat free products won't make you fat is a gross misconception.

The older we get the slower the metabolism and the slower we burn fat. The more we create this blood sugar roller-coaster the more we will crave food, especially simple carbohydrates, because when we produce more insulin than glucose we create a hypoglycemic response. This sends a message to the brain to seek out and consume more carbohydrates to balance the high insulin. Well of course this becomes a vicious circle and consequently we get fatter and fatter. And then there is the hormone factor with female baby boomers that adds to the complexity of the insulin problem but that is a long story.

Now you may say ok, but obesity is on the rise with children also. Well, look at what children are eating. Even the most active child cannot keep up with the massive amount of nutrient deplete, highly processed and refined carbohydrates. In the 1970, the average consumption of sugar was 24 lbs per capita, per year, in the US. Today the amount of sugar consumed per person is 158 lbs. per year. The soft drink consumption alone in this country is outrageous. A 12 oz. soda has about 8 teaspoons of sugar in it. Remember in the old days a Coke was in a 10 oz. bottle? A Big Gulp is 44 oz. of soda, and now the advertising the new 64 oz. Big Gulp. That's half of a gallon of soda pop, do the math, it has about 41 teaspoons of sugar in one drink not to mention the amount of caffeine, which is still another story. Well, I could go on and on about this subject but if you want to know more visit my website at center4naturalhealth.com. I hope this gives you food for thought!