



Calorie Restriction...REALLY?

by Dr. Kelly J. Gibas



CALORIE RESTRICTION...REALLY?

“**Mocha, Skip the Whip...**” It’s the great American paradox; we inhale our evening pasta, while listening to the news report on “*Calorie Restriction!*” *It rubs our gluttony the wrong way.* Most people will admit to slight overindulgence, but *deliberate calorie restriction...really?* And so, the science, which links excess calorie consumption and longevity, is omitted.

For most Americans, it’s too impractical, after all, we’re still struggling to skip the whip on our mocha! Yet, the facts are irrefutable, consuming excess calories shortens the average life span by facilitating the development of age related diseases that preclude people from attaining healthy longevity.

Calorie dense, toxic foods are abundant, cheap and heavily advertised. It’s no wonder that most adults and children eat far more than what their body requires. A recent report from the Institute of Cancer Research reported that excess body fat is now considered a major cause of cancer.

IS YOUR SMOKE NOW A COKE?

In 1964, the Surgeon General proclaimed the lethal effects of cigarette smoking. Many smokers, however, enjoyed their cigarettes too much to ever quit. **But for many, oversized breakfasts, lunches, dinners & snacks became acceptable substitutes for the tobacco.** To break drug addiction, it’s important to remove the addict from the environment of other “users“, and to remove the drug. But with food, that is nearly impossible, “...*sorry Grandma, I can’t visit because you’re a fellow sugar-aholic!*” We literally can’t escape food or those who abuse it; and, it’s highly unlikely that the Surgeon General will sound a harsh warning. *For this reason, food is a unique substance addiction; therefore, it’s critical to learn an internal mastery of the addiction! But, is this possible?*

Internal hormonal balance is the key to successful calorie restriction. Actually, it’s the only way to reduce calories without wasting muscle mass. Most popular restriction plans are based on frequent high carb meals throughout the day. After all, aren’t rice cakes, fruits & vegetables the least dense in calories? However, these foods elevate insulin levels and stop fat burning!

BURN, DON’T WASTE!

The consequence of low calorie/high carb dieting is *elevated insulin*. Thus, when the body senses a calorie deficit, instead of burning fat for energy, the adrenals will release cortisol (a code red!) The cortisol causes the liver to dump glycogen (sugar) into the blood stream which gives the body & brain an immediate, yet temporary, boost. **However, cortisol also increases insulin levels even higher & chews away muscle tissue!**

The secret to low calorie success is training the body to literally “***eat from the stored fat***” (most Americans have the equivalent of 11,000 stored pancakes in their fat reserves!) If the body is forced to actually use the fat reserves for energy, it allows for healthy calorie restriction, without the hunger. This form of reduction WILL NOT retard the metabolic rate; *the body can’t differentiate between the fuel converted from the fat stores & the fuel being stuffed into our mouth.* As long as the body is eating, there’s no cortisol response and the metabolic rate will be sustained.



The problem with the high carb/low calorie plan is it biologically PREVENTS the body from burning fat; it stimulates an insulin release. So, although the diet is low in calories, it hormonally forces the body into a sugar-based metabolism. Eating this way will prevent fat loss, waste muscle, release cortisol and deteriorate the metabolic rate.

***They key to healthy calorie reduction is LOW INSULIN.** When insulin is low, the body MUST burn fat for energy; it's a physiological law of metabolism!*

EAT FROM YOUR FAT!

With high carb/low calorie eating, there will be hunger. ***Why?** Blood sugar dips quickly when calories are restricted. As blood sugar dips, a strong message is sent to the brain... "sugar needed!" Ideally, this is when fat burning should kick into high gear. **If insulin levels are low, the pancreas releases glucagon; glucagon converts fat into glucose for the brain & body.** If this axis works properly, the body can "eat from its fat" for many hours without hunger. However, if insulin is elevated, a hypoglycemic (low blood sugar) reaction occurs. Hypoglycemia causes a cortisol release from the adrenals with a strong hormonal demand for food!*

*At this point, calorie restriction is not an option, you are hormonally forced to eat. Hypoglycemia forces most people to eat high carb foods (because the brain is asking for sugar) which sets the whole cycle into motion again. Once this carb cycle starts, the only way to maintain calorie restriction is through frequent low calorie meals. Unfortunately, frequent eating (especially high carb eating) blocks the fat burning phase! Yes, the reduction in calorie load will still substantiate into weight loss, but what is lost? **With high insulin, the loss will be muscle!** However, there is a healthy way to practice calorie restriction; it's AFTER you've reduced your basal insulin levels. Once insulin levels have cleared and you're achieving the desired 3-5 hours between meals without hunger, you can begin to experiment with calorie restriction.*

***How?** Start by extending the stretch between breakfast and lunch. Eat a healthy, high protein breakfast, but try to wait 5-9 hours before eating again. Remember, this is not about will power, it will only work if you are in the zone of low insulin & high fat burn (no hunger!) Next, combine a late lunch and an early dinner into one meal. Each day experiment by stretching the mid-day fast longer and longer. As you train your body to feed from the fat stores, it will become more and more efficient. Lack of hunger is the #1 sign that you are in the fat burning mode.*

METABOLIC SUICIDE...

And, don't forget the "food frequency factor" in regard to insulin release. Many people try dabbling in calorie restriction by eating many small meals & snacks throughout the day. ***This is metabolic suicide because the pancreas is releasing waves of insulin throughout the entire day; the body is physiologically blocked from using fat as energy. Remember, weight loss from this method of calorie restriction, will be primarily muscle wasting.***

A word of caution, stay in tune to your body composition during calorie restriction. If your body fat stays the same or increases, and your lean muscle declines, stop the restriction! ***This is a cortisol reaction.** A decline in body fat is the primary indication that you are in the zone of low insulin/high fat burn! An added bonus, you'll feel better, too. Dr. Barry Sears, biochemist and author of The Zone, states, "...fuel converted from fat has the potential of producing at least 33% more energy (ATP) for the cells than fuel from carbs!*

...FIND YOUR ZONE