



Why am I Putting on Weight? And WHY is it so Hard to Take it Off?: Understanding Hormonal Imbalances and Weight Loss

Weight gain isn't just an issue associated with the food you eat or how much you exercise. It can also be affected by your hormones — and vice versa. Often, however, larger weight fluctuations are due to a hormonal change or imbalance, which is something many people don't even think about. According to studies, hormonal changes can influence your appetite, including how much you eat and what you're craving. They can also even cause you to store more or less fat in your body, depending on their balance.

If you're having trouble losing weight, despite eating healthy and exercising regularly, it could be due to a hormonal imbalance. Let's take a look at some of the most common ones that contribute to weight gain:

1: Poor sleep. If you don't get enough sleep these habits can lead to increased levels of cortisol and stress hormones, which in turn can drive weight gain. Chronic lack of sleep doesn't just affect obesity levels; it adversely affects every biological system in the body and can lead to disease and early death.

2: High levels of cortisol. Cortisol is a stress hormone that's released in response to traumatic or stressful events. When it's chronically elevated, it leads to weight gain, especially around the belly area. Cortisol is an essential stress response hormone and acute short term increases in Cortisol are part of our "fight or flight" mechanism. However, chronic high levels of cortisol can lead to high blood pressure, elevated glucose levels, increased belly fat, and even muscle loss. If we don't know how to

manage our stress levels the adrenal glands produce less and less cortisol which leads to another condition called adrenal fatigue which causes a chronically sluggish metabolism. Adrenal fatigue affects not only the entire endocrine system, but also makes it harder to cope with every-day life events and makes us much less resilient and more prone to disease

3: Insulin resistance. This condition develops when your cells become resistant to insulin, which is responsible for controlling blood sugar levels. Higher insulin levels signal the body to store more fat, especially around the abdominal area. This particular fat (also called visceral fat) is hazardous to health and can cause fatty liver disease and increased Inflammation levels. The two biggest causes of Insulin Resistance are eating a diet high in processed foods and sugars along with not getting enough exercise. A poor diet not only leads to obesity, but it also creates an imbalance in the health of the gut microbiome. Insulin Resistance can also lead to Syndrome X, also referred to as Metabolic Syndrome. This occurs when a person has high blood pressure, elevated glucose levels, abnormal cholesterol, and excess abdominal fat. These issues are a recipe for disease and will almost certainly contribute to a life of poor health and early death if they are not addressed at their root cause. Insulin resistance can be reversed. Fad diets or calorie-restricted diets are not needed to reverse resistance; all that's needed is to cut out processed foods and foods high in sugar and increase physical activity. These two things alone will go a long way towards better health

4: Hypothyroidism - an underactive thyroid - is another common hormonal imbalance that can lead to weight gain. This occurs when the thyroid gland doesn't produce enough thyroid hormone, which is responsible for regulating metabolism. Symptoms of hypothyroidism include weight gain, fatigue, constipation, and depression. The good news is that this condition can be treated with medication and by making some dietary changes. T4 is the hormone made by the thyroid gland that is secreted throughout the body. However, T4 needs to be converted into T3 hormone in order for the cells to function properly and be converted into energy. Not everyone can convert T4 in to T3; it's actually quite a common problem. When this is the case, no amount of Levothyroxine is going to correct an underactive thyroid. Additionally, a common cause of hypothyroidism is a condition called Hashimoto's Disease. This is an

autoimmune disorder in which antibodies attack the thyroid gland which cause degradation to the gland itself.

5: Leptin and Ghrelin: These are two hormones that are responsible for controlling hunger and feelings of fullness. Ghrelin is the hormone that stimulates appetite, while leptin is the hormone that signals the body to stop eating. When these hormones are out of balance, it can lead to weight gain or difficulty losing weight. Leptin resistance develops when the cells become resistant to leptin, which means that the body doesn't get the signal to stop eating. This leads to overeating and weight gain. Ghrelin resistance develops when there is an overproduction of ghrelin, which results in a feeling of being always hungry.

5: Imbalance between oestrogen and progesterone. Oestrogen dominance is a condition in which there's an imbalance between the two hormones, with often progesterone actually the first hormone to fall in the pre-menopause period. It is the imbalance as well as the absolute levels falling that leads to weight gain and symptoms of fatigue, night sweats, brain fog and joint aches (amongst other symptoms) that all contribute to poor sleep and a lack of energy and motivation to exercise, a vicious circle. Some ways to manage your oestrogen are to get plenty of fibre in your diet, eat more cruciferous vegetables, exercise more frequently, and add flaxseeds to your diet.

So what's the solution?

The answer to resolving these hormonal imbalances and restoring weight-loss is not a quick fix, or a one size fits all approach. It requires dedication to making some changes in your lifestyle – changes that will improve your overall health and help you feel more energetic and motivated. This includes eating a healthy diet rich in protein and minerals, getting enough good quality sleep, and exercising regularly. These things combined with some targeted supplements can help to restore hormone balance and get your weight-loss journey back on track.

So if you're finding it difficult to lose weight, or you've been struggling for a while now, consider that one of these hormonal imbalances might be the root of the problem. Address the imbalance, and you will likely see a change in your weight as well.

Some helpful tips:

- Get enough good quality sleep
- Eliminate processed foods and foods high in sugar from your diet
- Include protein and mineral rich foods in your diet
- Exercise regularly
- Consider targeted supplements to help restore hormone balance.

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