



WHY CAN'T I LOSE WEIGHT?

To lose weight, we must create a deficit in calories. We must eat less calories than we burn. We can do that by eating less calories or by exercising and burning up more calories. But there is more to the story. Sometimes we send the wrong message to our brain.

SKIPPED MEALS: When we skip meals, we send a message to our brain to store calories as fat. When we skip meals on a regular basis, our brain thinks we are starving. The primary job of the body is to survive. It is an important part of evolution, and the reason man has survived for thousands of years. When early man could not find food, the body slowed its metabolism and used a very small number of calories for organ function and saved the rest. This is called the starvation mode. In modern times, that is equal to skipping meals.

SPACING/SIZE OF MEALS: The body likes to receive nutrition every three to four hours, similar to an infant. When we eat two or three larger meals per day, the body only uses a portion of the calories for organ function and activities of daily living; the rest are stored as fat. Since modern man is basically sedentary, many of the calories consumed are sent to fat storage. Eating three small meals and two to three snacks per day (every three to four hours) gives us a much better chance of efficiently burning more of the calories consumed instead of storing them as fat.

TYPE OF MEALS: No matter our race or our country, we all eat too many carbohydrates—the cheapest food source. In America, they are simple carbohydrates (refined white flour and sugar). When we eat mainly simple carbohydrates, the pancreas releases insulin rapidly and in large amounts. Excessive levels of insulin send messages to the brain to store calories as fat that are not shortly utilized for energy (weight gain); deposit the fat in the abdominal area (belly fat); and halt the release of stored fat (weight loss). The body does not like to lose weight.

TIME OF MEALS: When the body gets ready to sleep (dusk), the brain starts "turning off the lights". Everything starts to slow down--our breathing, heart rate, organ function, etc., AND metabolism. When we digest food, the opposite happens. The body starts to "rev up its engine" to divert energy to digestion. When we eat too close to bedtime, the brain is confused because it is receiving opposing messages. In addition to this confusion, we are basically physically inactive during sleep. The brain instructs the body to store the calories as fat.

Each one of these situations sends a message to the brain to store calories not shortly utilized for energy as fat. Remember that can be a significant number of calories because we are basically inactive.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Stop skipping meals.
- Gradually change to 3 small meals and 2-3 snacks per day, well balanced, about every 3-4 hours.
- Change to whole grains and limit simple carbohydrates (the white stuff and most desserts).
- Try to eat your last meal or snack at least 2 hours before bedtime.
- Get moving! Be more active! Try to get at least 30 minutes of structured physical activity every day (may be accumulated) and increase your daily movement.
- Sign up for our class "Why Can't I Lose Weight?" at <https://www.bewell365.com/e-classes> for more instruction and detail. Check out our complete JOURNEY TO WELLNESS program to learn how to make a complete lifestyle change.

