

# NATURAL HEALTH SERVICES

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## Weight Loss By Keith Post, ND

Are you constipated? Right away, you're headed for problems. You need to increase your intake of foods naturally high in fiber, i.e. whole grains, non-starchy vegetables and fruit. Please note, however, that fruits are best eaten alone or before other heavier types of foods. Otherwise, they will cause fermentation in the digestive system, hence that groggy, almost drunk feeling after a heavy holiday meal followed by sweet desserts.

If you're still constipated, even though you are eating lots of fiber-rich foods, you should consider supplementing your diet with psyllium husks. Start with 1 teaspoon added to 8 ounces of juice and water every morning 15-30 minutes before breakfast or before bedtime. I use a shaker bottle and drink it immediately before it thickens. You can usually buy psyllium husks inexpensively in the bulk foods section of your local health foods store.

If constipation persists after these treatments, ask yourself: "What situation exists in my life that I am unable to fully release?" or "What is it that I'm still hanging on to?" To heal this blockage, I would recommend that you work for a while with a counselor that employs techniques designed to encourage cathartic release. Or you may need to learn to become more openhearted, flexible or forgiving. The main objective is that you learn how to release situations that are troubling you. Situations have a way of eventually working themselves out if we don't get in the way too much, anyway.

Drinking sufficient fluids is also very important to the eliminative process. Distilled or purified water, neither too hot nor too cold works best for this purpose. Also, it is usually better to drink most of your fluids between meals, rather than with them. This is because drinking fluids with meals tends to dilute your digestive enzymes, rendering digestion less effective. Also, try to pay attention to your natural thirst and drink when you are actually thirsty or have a dry throat, rather than forcing fluids when you are not really thirsty, as some health authorities seem to be recommending. Otherwise, you can actually get "waterlogged." If you habitually have a low thirst, chances are that you need to exercise more.

A big reason that people tend to overeat is that they are overindulging their hunger drive due to the frustration or suppression of other strong drives in their life, i.e. the needs for security, sexual fulfillment, self-esteem, a bonded love relationship and the expression of their creative urges. In this culture, the lack of sexual fulfillment seems to be a common theme, so let's examine this topic more deeply.

If you're in a relationship, are you getting the level of satisfaction that you desire? And, if not, why not? Do you and your partner communicate your desires effectively with each other? Does guilt about your natural sexuality inhibit you or otherwise get in the way? Do you have differences in desire level? Desire usually increases when communication is good and our desires are being met. Is there a willingness to fully pleasure each other? One of the laws of the universe is that those who freely give

will receive in abundance, whether it be money, love, joy or whatever the type of energy is being given. Holding back in lovemaking or any life activity will inhibit the flow of energy within your own life and is usually fear-based. And, many of our fears are irrational, having been developed in childhood.

Another problem is that we sometimes assume that our partner knows exactly what we want, even though we haven't told them. In other words, we expect them to be able to read our minds. Well, unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. Don't hesitate to ask for what you want! Also, don't hesitate to work as a couple with a counselor who specializes with relationship issues or sexual dysfunction, if necessary. See this as a wise investment towards your future health and happiness together. It will probably enhance the quality of life for both of you more than most of the things we habitually spend our money on.

Now, let's assume that you're not constipated and that all of your needs are being met, but you're still overweight. There is a good chance that your endocrine system is out of balance or that you are eating the wrong types of foods. In any case, I urge you to avoid the commercial "diet pills" containing guarana or ephedra ("ma-huang"), as they act like speed in the body. They may lead to quick weight loss, but you will gain the weight back later and often weigh even more than you did previously. Another type of weight loss product contains substances that act like diuretics in the body. These will cause quick weight loss due to the removal of fluids from the body, but again, it will usually all come back later.

The more health-oriented supplements will often contain pancreatic enzymes, which give the already exhausted pancreas gland a much-needed rest, while ensuring that the carbohydrate content of your foods is fully processed and utilized. They will also usually contain chromium, a micro-mineral that is essential to optimal pancreatic functioning and vanadium, which is a trace mineral having insulin-like activity. They may also have certain herbal extracts, such as Garcinia cambogia ("brindle berry"), which has a natural appetite-suppressing activity.

If you choose, you could just take the chromium by itself. The recommended daily allowance is 200 micrograms. In addition, however, you must exercise with any program, in order to convert your fatty tissue to muscle tissue. On a correct weight loss program, you will lose weight slowly but steadily. Only, sometimes you may find yourself losing inches instead of poundage, which is great because this shows that conversion from fat to muscle is taking place. You will be looking trimmer and feeling a lot better, too. Also, you will be much less likely to revert to your previous condition. If you have a coffee habit, however, I would recommend that you take a multiple vitamin and mineral supplement every day to replace the nutrients that you are losing in your urine. Most multiples will contain enough of the chromium that your body requires to function correctly.

Now, before I get into the actual mechanics of how to lose weight, you should know that many people have actually lost weight successfully through the use of visualization or mental imagery. In other words, it is important to begin to "see" yourself, as you would like to be, free of the extra poundage. At the same time, it is important for you to set realistic goals. In other words, large-boned women are not intended to look like "Twiggy." Many people suffering from anorexia, bulimia or other eating disorders need to become aware of what their body-type is meant to look like and make their weight-loss goals accordingly. They would also benefit from working with a health-care practitioner to address their underlying self-esteem issues.

When analyzing any health problem, I like to keep things as simple as possible. So, let's look at two important factors, and how they can impact weight-loss: activity level and mealtimes. In this culture, many of us tend to be most active earlier in the day, whereas we tend to consume our largest meal of

the day in the evening. The problem with this approach is that we end up storing it as fat because we weren't active enough in the evening to utilize what we ate. Here are some options that can help you to change to a more sensible approach:

- Consider making your noon meal your largest meal of the day, followed by a light supper. If you get sleepy after lunch, take a short nap while lying on your left side to facilitate digestion, followed by a short walk upon waking.
- Consider taking a long walk or other light sport an hour after eating your evening meal.
- Consider exercising more, in general. Choose an activity, exercise or sport that you find interesting and pleasurable, so that you will be more likely to do it on a regular basis. Be sure to make room for it in your schedule! Also, it may be helpful for you to have an exercise buddy for the mutual support and companionship it affords.
- If you're a walker or jogger, try your best to walk in the fresh air as much as possible, for the health benefits it provides. I would suggest that you avoid the busiest streets, due to their high levels of air and noise pollution. Walking paths in public parks and high-school outdoor tracks are good alternatives. If you dress according to the weather, you can be outdoors year-round in most locations. This will have the additional benefit of building your immune system.
- Try to walk for at least 30 minutes five days a week. And, if you're really motivated, try to walk another 30 minutes later in the day, as well.
- Avoid engaging excessively in nonproductive sedentary activities, such as watching television. Instead, use your leisure time to engage in creative activities, i.e. studying, creative writing, arts, crafts, singing or playing an instrument.

Mealtimes should be relaxed and stress-free. Put aside the problems of the day and take time to relax before eating, if necessary. Come to the dinner table with a positive mental attitude. See the food as building a strong mind and body. This is the meaning behind the act of "blessing" the food practiced by many of the world's religions. Try not to rely on alcoholic drinks before eating, as they actually numb your brain, without actually relaxing your digestive tract. In fact, they often act as an irritant. A little wine or beer with food may be helpful once in a while, though, if used in moderation. Here are some additional suggestions regarding the act of eating:

- Eat only when actually hungry.
- Avoid overeating. Stop eating when your hunger is satisfied. There should always be a little room left over in your stomach to avoid any discomfort or unnecessary weight gain.
- Eat consciously. Enjoy every bite. Avoid idle chatter while eating. If you do engage in conversation, keep it light and pleasant. Most people find that their digestion improves when they follow this advice.
- Avoid eating when you're feeling emotionally upset. Under these conditions, the food can act like poison in your system, and it will certainly not nourish you the way it was meant to.
- Eat exactly what your body feels like eating, so that you will end the meal with a feeling of satisfaction. Example: don't restrict yourself to a salad for your largest meal, when you really want something heavier.
- Avoid using food as either a self-rewarding mechanism or as a method of inflicting guilt upon yourself. There are many ways to give yourself a treat besides food. Find ways to use the other four senses to give yourself pleasure. For example, you could exchange massages with a friend or listen to some beautiful music.

There are some foods that are especially important to avoid while you are trying to lose weight:

- Avoid all foods made with white flour. White flour is flour that has been stripped of its fiber, minerals and nutritional content for the sake of shelf life. Because it is devoid of nutrition, constipating and full of chemicals, it will actually drain your body of energy over the long-term.
- Avoid all foods made predominantly of white sugar or high-fructose corn syrup, including candy and sweetened soft drinks or juices. These foods are also without fiber or nutritional content. But, in addition, if ingested habitually, they greatly overstimulate the pancreas, which can lead to reactive hypoglycemia or even diabetes mellitus, which is a very serious health complication. Incidentally, when sugar cane is being refined, the mineral-rich portion is usually removed and sold separately as molasses, which actually has health benefits. Brown sugar, on the other hand, is white sugar with some of the molasses added back into it. Raw sugar is cane juice recrystallized; never having had the molasses removed, and is fine in small quantities. I recommend honey as the sweetener of choice for those who tend to be chilly and are also overweight. This is because it is the only sweetener that has a warm quality and can actually increase metabolism.
- Avoid all margarine and foods made with hydrogenated oils, which are the main ingredients of margarine. Butter is actually much healthier for you, despite what you may have heard before. Butter melts quickly in the stomach and is mostly short-chain fatty acids, whereas hydrogenated oils do not melt as easily. Margarine also contains other non-food chemical additives and ingredients. Olive oil is also very healthy for you. I have articles on this subject if you have any further questions.

Here is a sample meal schedule that will assist you to make a steady, gradual weight loss. Please remember, though, that if you're doing lots of strength training, the changes may show up sometimes as a reduction in inches rather than in pounds.

### **Breakfast options:**

- Whole fruits only until noon.
- A meal-replacement drink.
- 1 tablespoon of molasses and the juice of ½ lemon mixed with 8 ounces of hot water.

### **Lunch:**

- Warm weather months: Eat a large and varied garden salad with lots of leafy, dark greens, accompanied by some melba toast or a piece of whole-grain bread.
- Cool weather months: Eat hearty soups with plenty of vegetables every day instead of the garden salad, especially if you tend to be chilly.

### **Dinner:**

This applies to the largest meal of the day, whether you plan to have it in the evening or at noon. If you do have dinner at noon, then follow the lunch guidelines in the evening. For this meal, the key is to make it simple, yet fulfilling and balanced in nutrients. At this time, it is best to have a meal consisting of: a high-protein food with non-starchy vegetables. A second option would be to have a meal

consisting of: a starchy vegetable or a whole grain (i.e. complex carbohydrates) with non-starchy vegetables. Here are some examples:

- Lean meat with green beans
- A baked potato with broccoli
- Brown rice with stir-fried vegetables

### **Snacks:**

In general, when losing weight, it is better not to snack, but to instead drink plenty of pure water or non-irritating herbal tea. However, here are some options if you've just got to have something:

- carrot or celery sticks
- fresh vegetable juice
- diluted fresh-squeezed fruit juices

Finally, here is a recipe for a drink that will assist you in losing weight, especially if your fasting salivary pH is less than 7.1. Mix 2 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar and 2 teaspoons of honey into 8 ounces of warm water. Take this mixture 20 to 30 minutes before each meal.

## **Ayurvedic Weight Loss Principles**

- The Kapha body-type is especially prone to weight gain and will also lose it the slowest.
- Avoid starvation or "crash dieting." They are usually uncomfortable and often cause a decreased metabolic rate, which later results in weight gain after coming off of a diet.
- Avoid cold drinks and cold foods, as they tend to trigger an increase in fat storage.
- Drink plenty of water when thirsty, but avoid excessive water drinking. Your overall intake of water will naturally decrease as you decrease the salt content of your diet. Drinking warm water or herbal tea is very helpful. Even better is to add honey, lemon and a pinch of black pepper.
- Foods that are high in the bitter, spicy or astringent tastes will help decrease weight.
- Increase your awareness around the act of eating. Chew your food thoroughly. Eat when feeling relaxed and comfortable.
- Try to eat your largest meal at noon. For quicker weight loss, eat one large, balanced meal at noon and no other meals. Take a short nap while lying on your left side afterwards, if you feel sleepy.
- Foods to avoid include: red meat, dairy, wheat, white sugar, white flour, alcoholic beverages, fried foods, excessively sour-tasting or salty-tasting foods (i.e. pickles), table salt, junk food and fast food.
- Raw honey is the only sweetener that is recommended in moderation, as it is warm in quality and actually increases metabolism.
- When you eat lots of sweet foods at one sitting, such as fruits, it is good to take them with bran or psyllium seed husk fiber.

- Some complex carbohydrates in the diet will make losing weight less stressful on the body and are necessary to burn up fat, anyway.
- Gradually reduce the quantity of food eaten at each meal.
- If you get too frustrated, go ahead and binge occasionally on healthy foods, but avoid punishing yourself or feeling guilty.
- Take vitamin and mineral supplements on a regular basis with food.
- Avoid oversleeping. Also, get in the habit of maintaining regular schedules for exercise and your other activities.
- Exercise four to five times per week. Moderately strenuous, sustained aerobic exercise is best, i.e. brisk walking for thirty minutes at a time.
- Spring is the best season to lose weight, as the onset of warmer weather facilitates weight loss.
- Copper alleviates Kapha, leading to less body fat, especially if water-weight gain is present. You can wear bracelets made of copper or drink water with copper ions present. To make copper water, boil 10 pennies washed in limewater in 1 quart of water until ½ of the water is gone. Then, take 2 teaspoonfuls 3 times per day for one month.
- Indulge yourself in other sensory areas as a reward for losing weight.
- Obesity is a disease of affluence and often occurs in civilized societies where people have time and money to waste. This results in a tendency towards boredom, overeating, continuous eating, oversleeping and engaging in mindless entertainment.
- Feelings of intense bitterness about the frustrations of one's life may be present, leading to an addiction to the sweet taste, resulting in obesity.
- Overweight people are often warm-hearted people, who are despairing of locating a secure, bonded love relationship. Extra body fat gives them a feeling of solace and comfort. One solution would be to redirect one's affections externally to community service or internally, to spiritual development.

## **Ayurvedic Weight Loss Remedies**

- All foods and botanicals that are highest in the bitter, spicy or astringent tastes: barberry, black pepper, gentian, golden seal, gotu kola, red raspberry, saffron and turmeric.
- **Triphala Guggulu:** a compound formula consisting of: Triphala (three fruits), Trikatu (ginger, black pepper and long pepper) and Guggulu.
- If you are at least forty pounds overweight, consider taking 1 tablespoon of castor oil every morning for six weeks. Wash this down with a strong tea made from dried ginger.

*This article was written by Keith Post, ND, a board-licensed physician practicing in the Portland, Oregon area and is available online at <http://naturalhealthservices.info>.*