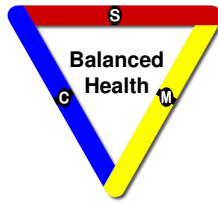


# Natural Health Center

*The Art & Science of Natural Healthcare*



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## Quest for the Magic Weight Loss Bullet

By

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December 15, 2004

Weight loss is as big of a health concern as it is big business in the U.S. The business concept is simple—weight gain and obesity cause many healthcare problems, therefore, create the magic bullet for weight loss and become a billionaire over night.

Currently, there are many different companies producing their own versions of magic weight loss bullets in the forms of low-fat or low-calorie foods, low-carbohydrate foods, diet sodas, nutritional weight loss supplements and drugs. The FDA estimates that Americans will spend nearly \$30 billion this year on some form of weight loss products and services. Yet, despite all of the efforts spent on weight loss, the 1999-2000 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) estimated that 64 percent of U.S. adults are either overweight or obese.

The quest for the magic weight loss bullet has succeeded in proving two things. First, the U.S. population is heavier now than ever. Second, weight gain and obesity is a complex issue that leads to other healthcare problems. The following article discusses 1) a brief history of weight loss approaches from past to present, and 2) the primary causes that lead to weight gain, and 3) natural treatments for weight gain and obesity.

Our brief history of weight loss approaches from past to present begins in the early 1980s when low-fat and diet-everything foods were first introduced into the marketplace. The thought was that by eating foods that contained less fat we would lose weight. This approach seemed like a reasonable solution, but unfortunately many low-fat and low-calorie foods were riddled with high amounts of refined

sugars, which left people hungrier and heavier than ever before.

In the quest to solve the hunger issue of the 1980s, drug companies began to develop powerful appetite suppression drugs such as Pondimin (Fenfluramine) or Fen-phen, which became the cornerstone of medically supervised weight loss programs throughout the 1990s.

Under the influence of these drugs people ate less and began to lose weight. Medically supervised weight loss went along fine until it was discovered that appetite suppressing drugs caused irreversible damage to vital organs such as the heart. In turn, these problems put a stop to many medical weight loss programs involving appetite suppressing drugs and left Americans overweight, hungry, and with damaged vital organ systems.

The pendulum can only swing so far before it has to travel back. The current trend in weight loss is now headed back to where it was prior to the 1980s with the reintroduction of the Dr. Atkins or South Beach low-carbohydrate, high-protein and moderate- to high-fat approach to weight loss. This trend is almost 180 degrees opposite to what was taught in the 1980s, which leaves us wondering where we go from here.

An even better question to answer is this: what are the primary causes leading to weight gain and what can be done to *naturally* treat weight gain and obesity? According to the former Surgeon General, Dr. C. Everett Koop, whether it is defined as a 'condition' or a 'disease,' obesity is directly linked to a number of disabling and life threatening diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, some forms of cancer, gallbladder disease, and osteoarthritis to name a few.

The greatest influence on weight loss is that of blood sugar regulation. In fact, according to new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) data, sugar consumption in 1999 was 158 pounds per person!

Most authorities would agree that a 12-hour fasting blood sugar level in excess of 120 is strongly suggestive of diabetes. However, a blood sugar level in excess of 120 does not happen over night. This process, now called insulin resistance or syndrome-x, is a slow and gradual upward climb in blood sugar that usually takes 20-40 years to develop into diabetes.

As blood sugar begins to rise, a hormone called insulin also begins to rise. Insulin is a hormone secreted by the pancreas, and at high levels has primarily one function: store excess blood sugar in the form of fat on the body. Therefore, as we poison our body by eating 158 pounds of sugar per year our body is trying to protect itself from the onslaught by storing the excess blood sugar as fat.

Ideally a 12-hour fasting blood sugar should be between 70 and 85. Anything higher is suggestive of some level of insulin resistance. In terms of naturally treating elevated blood sugar, both a lower carbohydrate/low glycemic diet and certain herbs such as fenugreek, bitter melon, gymnema, cinnamon bark along with nutritional supports such as alpha-lipoic acid, chromium and vanadium should be included in a comprehensive weight loss program.

A second factor that influences body weight is the amount of food one puts into their body. The medical weight loss drugs of the 1990s proved that appetite suppression allowed people to comfortably eat less and lose weight. Last month we discussed how amino acid precursors for the two master neurotransmitters serotonin and dopamine (5-HTP and L-Tyrosine, respectively) could be used in the treatment of ADD, ADHD, OCD and depression. Taken at appropriate levels, these amino acids also cause appetite suppression similar to that of a drug. This effect allows one to comfortably eat less and lose weight without the damaging side effects associated with appetite suppressing drugs.

The last factor that has had little or no public attention but has a tremendous influence on weight is food intolerance. According to Rudy Rivera, M.D., author of the book *Your*

*Hidden Food Allergies Are Making You Fat*, some 30 to 90 percent of the U.S. population is intolerant to one or more foods.

Consumption of foods that one is intolerant to causes increased toxicity, decreased metabolism, decreased energy production and depletion of serotonin from the body. Depletion of serotonin increases the appetite, especially for sweets. This depletion in turn causes consumption of foods high in sugar and starches, which causes increased blood sugar, increased insulin and increased weight gain.

The logical natural approach to treating this issue is simple: identify and eliminate all of the foods one is intolerant to by means of lab and kinesiological testing. By identifying and eliminating these foods, cravings decrease, blood sugar and insulin levels normalize and fat is naturally reduced from the body.

Truth be told, there is no *single* magic bullet for weight loss. In the quest for the magic weight loss bullet, successful weight loss involves combining the above factors with the consumption of filtered water, a diet rich in low glycemic fruits, vegetables and lean meats (grilled, broiled or baked) with a moderate amount of exercise 3 to 5 days per week.

Combined with time and dedication, all these factors together form a *magic weight loss formula* capable of yielding results that will speak for themselves.

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