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30 POUNDS
IN 3 MONTHS
and
KEEP IT OFF
FOR LIFE!

THE STUBBORN FAT FIX

EAT RIGHT TO
LOSE WEIGHT AND
CURE METABOLIC
BURNOUT WITHOUT
HUNGER OR EXERCISE

KEITH BERKOWITZ, MD
AND VALERIE BERKOWITZ, MS, RD

Foreword by Mark Hyman, MD, author of *Ultrametabolism*

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WITH **ALISA BOWMAN**

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The information in this book is meant to supplement, not replace, proper exercise training. All forms of exercise pose some inherent risks. The editors and publisher advise readers to take full responsibility for their safety and know their limits. Before practicing the exercises in this book, make sure that your equipment is well maintained, and do not take risks beyond your level of experience, aptitude, training, and fitness. The exercise and dietary programs in this book are not intended as a substitute for any exercise routine or dietary regimen that may have been prescribed by your doctor. As with all exercise and dietary programs, you should get your doctor's approval before beginning.

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Foreword

We are disoriented, dazed, and confused by an abundance of misinformation, contradictory nutritional claims, and lack of clear, practical steps to address our personal and our global struggle with excess weight. On our planet, more people are now overweight than are starving. Obesity has exceeded malnutrition as the number one cause of death worldwide, resulting in 29 million deaths from preventable lifestyle disease such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and dementia.

Solutions to this crisis are not immediately evident because our national food policy is controlled by an agriculture and food industry that profits from increased consumption of “fake foods” or “Frankenfoods.” Yet buried within that mountain of misinformation and deliberate deception, the science of what to eat, how to create health, and how to automatically restore normal metabolism and self-regulate our weight, is screaming to be known.

Now Dr. Keith and Valerie Berkowitz clear up the misinformation. From their personal and professional experience and from the overwhelming scientific literature, they present the wisdom of practical, responsible clinicians who have successfully helped thousands of patients lose weight for good.

The Stubborn Fat Fix's brilliance lies in its simplicity and accessibility for everyone. Eat more real food. Move a little, rest a little, and add metabolism-boosting nutrients. That's it. But the implications for this are broad and profound. What's more important than what we *don't* eat is what we *do* eat.

It is no mystery why we are sick and fat. With each of us on average consuming 66 pounds of high fructose corn syrup, 158 pounds of total sugar, mountains of trans fats, and more than 3,500 chemicals (MSG,

aspartame, and food dye, to name a few) added to our food—as well as a gallon each of toxic pesticides every year—it is a wonder we are walking around at all.

Real food is something most of us rarely consume—whole foods just as they are found in nature—a whole fresh vegetable, not salty canned versions; a whole brown rice grain, not processed flour; a whole fruit, not fruit juice; a whole nut instead of trans fat and sugar-laden processed nut butters; and beans, seeds, lean animal protein such as fish, chicken and eggs. Think farmer's field, not food chemist's lab.

If you do this, then counting fat grams, calories, and carbs is unnecessary. You can eat more and weigh less.

All of the obstacles to weight loss disappear when we put foods that we are designed to thrive on in our bodies and limit artificial additives that block, interfere, or alter our normal appetite and metabolism. You will no longer suffer cravings, hunger, or deprivation. This book is about possibility—the possibility of effortless weight loss by focusing on health first.

The Stubborn Fat Fix is a bright spot in the darkness of an obesity epidemic that should be read for its common sense, science-based, simple, and extraordinarily practical road map. This map will not only create sustained and mostly effortless weight loss, but radically transform your health and well-being at the same time. And here's the simple reason. The same things that make you sick make you fat. And the same things that make you fat make you sick. So when you eat real, fresh, whole foods and take care of your body's basic needs for movement, rest, relaxation, and nutrients, not only do the pounds fall away, but diseases disappear as well. So the side effect of *The Stubborn Fat Fix* is preventing, reversing, and often curing chronic illness. Not bad.

Mark Hyman, MD
December 2008

Author of *UltraMetabolism: The Simple Plan for Automatic Weight Loss*, and *The UltraMind Solution: Fixing Your Broken Brain by Healing Your Body First*

Acknowledgments

We are extremely thankful for the opportunity to help you improve the quality of your life. Thanks to Rodale Inc. for helping us spread the message that eating healthy isn't just about losing weight but about getting well and living longer, too.

Specifically, we'd like to thank Adam Campbell at *Men's Health*® magazine. You've been a great supporter and friend. Also, our editors, Kathy LeSage and Andrea Au Levitt: Thank you for discovering us, believing in us, and encouraging us every step of the way. This book would never have happened if it weren't for you.

Jeremy Katz, our agent, has been a mastermind who not only coordinated this winning team but even lent some of his personal recipes to the cause. Alisa Bowman spent many tireless hours writing this magnificent book, developing recipes, and managing our deadlines. Thanks to Dr. Mark Hyman for contributing the Foreword.

To the Goldstein and Berkowitz families: It was your solid base that allowed us to explore this alternative way of eating and wellness. To our three children: You give us daily inspiration and always make sure we are on course.

A huge thanks also goes to our clients, especially those who allowed us to tell their stories within the pages of this book.

Beata Moniuszko and Binni Ipcar: You are the heart and soul behind our practice. You each play a critical role in the success of our patients at the Center for Balanced Health.

We also thank the late Dr. Robert C. Atkins. He was and still is an inspiration to us in changing the way we practice medicine and nutrition. He was a pioneer in this field.

THE
STUBBORN
FAT FIX



THE OVERSPENT BODY

We wrote this book for the multitudes of people whose physicians have told them to lose weight “or else.”

Or else you’ll need blood pressure, blood sugar, or blood cholesterol medication.

Or else you’ll need bypass surgery.

Or else your diabetes will result in blindness, amputated limbs, or organ failure.

Or else you’ll die.

Or else. We don’t use those words in our practice. We don’t because we understand that you have been trying for many years to lose weight. We believe you. We also know all too well just how many physicians, friends, and spouses have already said those words. We know that the words *or else* do not motivate people to lose weight.

You don’t need to hear these words because you already know them. Michael certainly did. When he came to our practice for the first time, he was more than 20 pounds overweight, diabetic, and terrorized by “or else.” “In the past six years, I’ve gone from doctor to doctor,” he told us. “Each one prescribed me a different batch of drugs, none of which worked.” By the time Michael came to us, he was taking \$400 worth of prescription medications every single month, was fed up with doctors, and was terrified. “I’m afraid that I’m going to die,” he said.

He wanted to see his children grow up, attend college, get married, and have children of their own. He desperately wanted to lose weight. What was stopping him? His body was bankrupt, and his physicians were trying to pull him out of that bankruptcy by getting him to stress his body even more—more in the way of exercise, more in the way of effort, more in the way of fear. Sure, various physicians had suggested he eat less. They hadn't, however, shown him how to eat less in the midst of everyday crises such as hunger, cravings, and fatigue.

Once we outlined our nutritional and supplement plan and gave Michael the tools he needed to stick to it, Michael started losing easily. His blood sugar evened out. Without the peaks and valleys in blood sugar, his cravings diminished. His hunger transformed into satisfaction. His energy levels normalized. His metabolism improved. He cut his monthly drug bill by 75 percent. He regained his confidence, and his life. Oh, and he also lost 20 pounds. You can read the details of how Michael did it on page 8, and we'll offer more stories of patients who lost anywhere from 10 to 70 pounds just by following our simple, sustainable plan. Keep reading to find out how you can get the same great results.

WEIGHT LOSS THAT WORKS

Over the years, we've helped hundreds of people just like Michael. We enable weight loss by encouraging our patients to do something that at first seems extremely counterintuitive: Eat more. Move less. That's right. Eat more. Move less.

Of course, you've heard you should do the opposite. You hear it all the time: eat less, move more, right? Yet this may be the worst advice to follow, because cutting back on food while ratcheting up your exercise can trigger sudden drops in blood sugar that increase cravings, decrease energy, and leave you hungrier than ever. This either gets you nowhere or gets you even heavier than you were before. These are your body's cries for help. There is an underlying cause of your hunger, preoccupation with food, and lack of energy.

On this program, by eating more and moving less, you will recharge your metabolism so you can finally, once and for all, lose weight. You'll do it without the deprivation associated with most diets, too. We don't expect 100 percent adherence to our plan—in fact, we “build in” opportunities to indulge. We've included luxuries such as ice cream, chocolate, and a glass of wine with dinner. You'll be able to enjoy the foods you love, and keep right on losing. More important, we'll show you how to have these foods without suffering extreme spikes and valleys in blood sugar. You'll learn how to eat to bring your body into balance.

A LITTLE ABOUT US

In 1999, we met Dr. Robert Atkins, tried his diet, and lost 20 pounds. Of course, we'd read the news stories and heard the experts claiming that the diet raised the risk for heart disease, so we made sure to monitor our health with regular blood work. You know what? Neither of us experienced a rise in blood cholesterol, blood pressure, or blood sugar. That experience won us over to the merits of low-carb diets and was the primary reason we signed on to work at the Atkins Center for Complementary Medicine. We believed Dr. Atkin's approach was truly revolutionary.

We eventually went out on our own, founding our private practice, the Center for Balanced Health in Manhattan. We set about creating a plan that would enable the most resistant body to shed fat in the real world. We wanted people to reap all of the dramatic weight loss of lower-carb, higher-protein, higher-fat diets, sure. But we also wanted to make sure they got enough other important nutrients—most critically, the fiber and wholesome foods such as fruits and vegetables that they weren't getting before. We also wanted to bring their bodies into balance. We wanted to find a more moderate approach that most people could stick with long term. While we worked and tinkered and fine-tuned, we stumbled onto perhaps the biggest secret to our success.

What was it, you ask?

We devised a way for people to continue to indulge in their favorite high-carbohydrate foods and still lose weight. When most people diet, they temporarily stop buying and eating foods such as ice cream, chocolate, bread, and fruit. Yet you can only deny yourself such delicious foods for so long. When you forgo all of your favorite high-carbohydrate foods, you end up wanting them all the more—and eventually you find your self-eating them all the more. Despite withstanding lots of deprivation, you end up overeating anyway, and gaining weight rather than losing. How frustrating! We knew that deprivation was the Achilles' heel of every low-carb plan, so we built in safety valves. No longer would a lowcarb diet equal a no-fun lifestyle. No more all-or-nothing, if-I-touch-acarb-it's-all-over deprivation. We'd created a successful, healthful, delicious diet plan that works long term—even in real life.

By following the program in this book, you'll lose up to 10 pounds in the first 2 weeks and up to 10 pounds a month after that until you reach your goal. You can succeed. You can lose weight. Read on to find out how. **THE NO-HUNGER DIET PLAN** To allow you to lose weight without hunger, we use an individualized five-pronged approach that includes: A whole foods diet: Based on your health, weight, and eating habits, you'll choose from two eating plans that vary in their amounts of recommended carbohydrate foods. These eating plans feature whole.

THE NO-HUNGER DIET PLAN

To allow you to lose weight without hunger, we use an individualized five-pronged approach that includes:

A whole foods diet: Based on your health, weight, and eating habits, you'll choose from two eating plans that vary in their amounts of recommended carbohydrate foods. These eating plans feature whole foods (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, meat, fish, eggs, and cheese) that are free of weight-gain-promoting additives such as added sugar, high fructose corn syrup, refined flour, trans fats, and refined soy.

You'll slowly add in more carbs as your body allows. You will not, however, have to eliminate your favorite whole foods forever. We include healthful, fiber-rich carbohydrate foods such as avocados, nuts, berries, and olives early in the plan. Yes, low-carbohydrate eating does not have to equal no-carbohydrate eating!

The food lover's pressure valve: You'll prevent that do-or-die moment—when low-carb dieters usually start fantasizing about belly flops into heaping plates of pasta—with regular servings of indulgence foods. These treats do away with deprivation altogether. You can enjoy regular small servings of dessert (yes, you

Shannon Bryant Lost 50 Pounds!

I've always struggled with my weight. My sisters are twigs. The biggest one is a size 4. My mom is a size 6. And then there is me. People assume that fat people eat 500 gallons of food a day, but that's not true with me. I've never eaten huge quantities of food. I'm not a snacker, but whatever I eat makes me gain weight.

In college, my freshman 15 was more like the freshman 40. And my weight has slowly and constantly crept up ever since. I've tried so many diets. I'd lose some weight, but I just could not stick with any of them long term, so I gained it back. In 1995, I went on a liquid diet and lost 50 pounds. I weighed 130 for 2 whole weeks! I was really cute. Then the leftovers from a banquet were stored in my office. I hadn't had a bite of solid food in 4 months. I was working late, and I decided to have some brie on a cracker. It was as if that first bite opened the floodgates of the Hoover Dam. I gained more than 100 pounds in a matter of months. My all-time high was 262.

With this approach, I've lost more than 50 pounds in 7 months and I'm still losing. This is the first diet I've been able to stick with long term.

heard right, we're talking chocolate and other sweet treats), fruit, and yes, even bread(!), and still lose weight. A lot of weight. We'll show you how, and we'll show you how to get and stay in control, too.

Supplements that heal your metabolism: You'll couple your whole foods diet and regular cheats with a supplement plan specially tailored to your individual body chemistry. These supplements have been shown to balance hormones, reduce cravings, dampen down appetite, and increase your energy and sense of well-being. They'll help restore your metabolism and greatly enhance your weight loss results. Rest and relaxation: Lack of sleep and high amounts of stress burn out your body. They bring hormones out of balance and increase appetite, both of which cause you to gain weight. We'll show you a simple yet effective plan for reining in stress and improving sleep, so you can reboot your body's healthy hormonal balance and lose weight without hunger or cravings.

The right amount of movement at the right time: On

I think it works because it's not as restrictive as diets I've tried in the past. Of course I miss certain foods, such as corn and potatoes, but I also get to eat foods that are fulfilling and tasty. For instance, I can eat sea scallops with drawn butter and steak with béarnaise sauce. I am, of course, eating more vegetables—especially celery and cucumbers—than I ever have before. But it's the savory, flavorful foods that keep me on track.

I get stuck more often now that I've lost and regained weight so many times. The plateaus are frustrating. I need a lot of patience to get through them. Not long ago, for instance, I didn't lose an ounce in 4 weeks. To help me get through this most recent plateau, the Berkowitzes suggested something that at first seemed counterintuitive. They suggested I cut back on exercise. I had been weight training three times a week, doing yoga twice a week, tennis once a week, and the elliptical trainer nearly every day. Now I alternate weights with cardio, and I take more days off. The scale is moving in the right direction again, and I'm at my lowest weight in 20 years.

You really do have to be ready to make a life change. You hear all the time that you can't go on a diet. It has to be a lifestyle. That's the God's honest truth. You can't adopt something that is intolerable and think you'll be able to do it for a few months until you lose the weight. You'll never make it. You need to do something that is reasonable, that you can do for the rest of your life. This is that diet.

this plan, you exercise only once you feel ready. For many people, that's only after losing a considerable amount of weight. Trying to force your body through intense cardio or weight lifting routines from the very beginning of a diet usually backfires. Why? In the beginning, with your metabolism out of balance, exercise just causes even more imbalance by keeping you in a burned-out state. It taxes your body at a time when you need rest. Plus, you feel tired. Who wants to exercise when they're tired? It's much better to change your eating first and then slowly add in exercise once you feel more energetic.

Most important, we'll support you every step of the way. Based on the hundreds of patients we've counseled over the years, we have a pretty good idea of the varied challenges, excuses, and roadblocks that stand between your current body size and your ideal weight. We'll show you what to eat to reduce nighttime cravings for sweets. We'll help you deal with interference from family and friends. We'll talk you through eating out, holidays, and vacations. We'll help you overcome emotional eating, stress eating, and mindless overeating. We'll even help you break addictions to sugar, caffeine, and starch, dependencies that make weight loss all but impossible.

We're here for you. We are because we've been there. We've not only helped people lose weight, but we've also done it ourselves.

Successful weight loss is about food, of course. But it's also about your spouse, your kids, your friends, your hobbies, your career, and your sleep habits. It's about how often you watch TV, and even about what you watch. It's about how long you sit in front of the computer each day. It's about preservatives and additives lurking in your food. It's about mind-set, and about whether you are a perfectionist or a more easygoing person. It's about what you can live without, and what you can't. Successful weight loss is about hunger and about cravings. It's about learning how to deal with both, and finding ways to overcome them.

Throughout the pages of this book, we're going to teach you about success. First and foremost, we're going to help you become successful biologically. Our diet and low-stress lifestyle plan will help you balance a complex set of appetite signals that trigger you to eat, overeat, and gain weight. Have you suspected that an overactive hunger switch or sluggish metabolism may be the cause of your weight problem? You're probably right.

Second, we're going to help you become successful psychologically. Have you tried low-carb diets before only to fall off the program when cravings for crunchy, sweet, or savory foods overpowered your ability to say no? We'll help you deal with those cravings by allowing indulgences early in the plan and by showing you how to stay in control when you have them. Unlike other low-carb diets that deny you anything remotely resembling a treat for weeks upon weeks, our plan recognizes that some people—many people—simply need a hint of sweetness to get them through some rough patches in the early days. Once you're past the initial phase, you can choose to indulge in ice cream, salty snacks, chocolate, wine or beer, and even bread—so you'll be able to have the foods you love when you want them most. These appetite-suppressing, satisfaction-promoting options will help you stay on track without feeling deprived.

Third, we're going to help you become successful socially. Your family and friends play a huge role in your ability to stick with your dietary approach. You'll learn what to do about the family member who suggests that late-night ice cream run—and how to put those indulgences on your schedule, not his. You'll learn how to handle the coworker who tempts you with her candy jar—so you can choose the higher quality chocolate that really satisfies.

That's what makes this plan different from others you may have tried. We give you the tools you need to make your dietary changes last a lifetime. We help you fire up your motivation and commitment from day one, and we stick with you every day of your weight-loss journey, offering solutions for common problems you will likely face along the way. We help you understand why your body fights against every single dietary change, and

we enable you to circumvent your body and, at times, your mind so you can be successful. Once you lose all the weight you want, we make sure the results of your hard efforts last.

BETTER HEALTH, BETTER WELL-BEING

We'll help you not only drop pounds but also do it in a way that restores total body health and well-being. Throughout this book, you will read the amazing stories of patient after patient who overcame extremely high cholesterol, blood pressure, and blood sugar. We've seen patients halve or even stop taking medications for blood pressure, asthma, and many other diseases and disorders. That's how much healthier they got with our nutritional, supplement, and stress reducing plan.

Thanks to the wealth of nutrient-rich whole foods and health promoting supplements, you can expect to see the following health benefits, some of which may take effect within days of starting the plan:

- Sleeping all night long, whereas now you may wake frequently
- Relief of gas and bloating
- Improved mood Increased energy

Michael Sachs Lost 20 Pounds!

When I started this program, I was 52 years old and had been diabetic for 6 years. At 6 foot 4 inches and 230 pounds, I knew I was overweight. I knew I ate too much, too. If I had pizza, I didn't just have two slices. I had six. If I was eating spaghetti, I didn't have one bowl. I had three. If it was sandwiches, I'd have two of them, not one.

Many physicians had told me to lose weight, but none offered me the specific advice or answers I needed to make it happen. I went from doctor to doctor, each prescribing me a new batch of medications, none of which worked. As time passed, my blood sugar rose. One physician even asked me not to return to his practice after the medications he prescribed failed to rein in my blood glucose! He blamed my poor health on me.

- Improved overall health
- Improved blood cholesterol levels and blood pressure
- Improved endurance during exercise

Your sex life will also perk up and joint pain will disappear. You'll also be happier and more confident.

Let's talk about some basic physiology. It will help you understand why past diets have not worked and why ours will.

Our stomach, intestines, fat cells, and organs are all linked to our brains through a complex set of appetite signals, and this appetite system is designed to encourage us to gain weight at every opportunity. Why? Our bodies are designed for famine. Not many hundreds of years ago, we humans could survive only if our bodies encouraged us to eat at every opportunity and to eat more than we needed at any given moment. We survived only if our bodies directed us to rest at every resting opportunity, and to move only when the movement helped us to eat or stay out of danger.

By the time I visited the Center for Balanced Health, I was afraid I was going to die. I wanted to be around for my kids, but it didn't seem as if I could get my eating or my blood sugar under control. Dr. Berkowitz sat with me for hours, answering all of my questions. He was compassionate and soothing. He was confident that he could help me. I believed in him and felt comforted by him. I was willing to try anything he suggested.

The nutrition plan recommended was logical. All of the meals suggested were normal, whole foods with an emphasis on fiber. I took out most of the starchy carbs, including the potatoes, pasta, and pizza. I limited my consumption of fruit. I started eating five or six small meals a day rather than three huge meals. I snacked on walnuts and almonds. At night, when I had the urge for something sweet, I tried ricotta cheese mixed with cinnamon, sweetened with a little vanilla and stevia. It tasted like ice cream.

It was effective. In 6 months, I not only lost 20 pounds but also reduced my fasting blood sugar by 150 points. I was able to reduce my monthly outlay on medications from roughly \$400 a month to less than \$100. My cholesterol and blood pressure dropped, too.

I now sleep through the night. When I wake in the morning, I feel rested. I feel better and look better. As the weight dropped and as my energy levels improved, so did my confidence and attitude.

Because of this survival system, we feel hungry whenever we see, hear, smell, or think about food. We can blame this overactive hunger response on a hormone called ghrelin. This hunger hormone, produced in the intestine, rises at mealtimes, when you see food, when you smell food, when you think about food, or when you see food on TV. Ghrelin is what makes your stomach feel empty. It travels to the brain and says, "Feed me."

I felt so much better that I was able to apply for and get my dream job of working for a large corporation in the technology field. I now have the problem of needing an entire wardrobe's worth of new suits. Life is good.

When ghrelin rises, it's hard to talk yourself through the hunger you feel. You may have just eaten. It may not be rational that you feel hungry, but you do. So you eat.

Food hits your stomach and intestines. As the stomach fills out and expands, nerves register the sensation of being stretched and send the brain the "I'm full" signal. Other chemicals, including a hormone called leptin that is released from your fat cells, confirm this message, telling the brain, "We're really full now." They also tell the stomach to stop sending food into the backlogged intestine and tell the pancreas to make insulin to shuttle blood sugar into cells. The problem is that these signals are sluggish and they don't travel quickly. It takes 10 to 20 minutes for these signals to reach the brain with the "I'm uncomfortably full" message, and, for most people, that's too late. The sluggish response allows us to wolf down much more food than our bodies need at any given time, especially if we are eating quickly.

Depending on what we've just eaten and how quickly the food moves through the intestines, these fullness signals can be fleeting. Once they tell the brain "I'm full," fullness signals dissipate, which is why we're all capable of feeling hungry within minutes after eating large amounts of food, especially if we have an ice cream sundae sitting in front of us.

As soon as you gain just a little bit of weight or throw the system off with too much stress or too much of the wrong types of foods, these messages

from the various hunger and fullness hormones get distorted. The hunger hormones grow stronger and the fullness hormones grow weaker. Leptin and insulin levels remain chronically high, and the brain stops listening to them. Instead, appetite signals keep getting through, and you continue to feel hungry, even when you shouldn't. According to the signals that are getting through to your brain, you are "starving," and we mean that literally. Even though you are actually gaining weight, your brain is getting the message that you are wasting away, so it directs your stomach to rumble at every opportunity. You're living in times of plenty, but your brain thinks you're in the middle of the Great Depression.

Muscle cells stop responding to insulin, so insulin has no choice but to usher calories into fat cells. This survival system worked well for us when our next huge meal might be days or weeks away. It doesn't help us out so much today, however, when our next meal is as close as the refrigerator.

BUT I EAT ALMOST NOTHING!

You've struggled to lose weight because your metabolism is not in balance. What is your metabolism? In the simplest terms, it's how the body converts food into energy. Ideally, you want your metabolism to operate much like Warren Buffet's bank account. You want the deposits (what you eat) to balance the withdrawals (what you burn) so that you maintain a healthy weight. This is not how most people's metabolisms work. Most people run really fast for a while, and then they run really slow. They put in too many deposits and then spend, spend, and spend. They create highs and lows that stress and run down key body organs and hormones, including:

The pancreas. As your stomach and intestines break down the food you eat into fuel that can be absorbed into the bloodstream, the pancreas pumps out insulin, a hormone that helps your body either store extra calories (as fat) or burn them for energy. Think of it as a master key that opens many doors (cell membranes) throughout your body. Some of these doors are on muscle cells. When insulin fits into the locks on these cells, blood sugar

enters and is either incinerated to make energy or stored (in the form of glycogen) for later use. Insulin can also open doors on your fat cells. When it fits into a fat cell's lock, blood sugar is converted into fat and stored in the cell. Some insulin is good—it helps the food you eat go where it belongs. Too much insulin—which generally comes from eating too much of the wrong types of food—is not.

Elevated insulin is the underlying cause of weight gain, unstable blood sugar, low blood sugar, mood swings, low energy levels, and many health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, some cancers, and, in women, polycystic ovarian syndrome (a condition characterized by weight gain, infertility, and excess body hair). Elevated insulin is also to blame for metabolic syndrome, an increasingly common condition characterized by three or more of the following factors: abdominal obesity, elevated triglyceride levels, low HDL cholesterol, elevated blood pressure, and elevated fasting glucose levels. When insulin rises and stays elevated, it keeps you feeling hungry, and it stores excess

Anette Muscarella Lost 40 Pounds!

I've struggled with my weight my entire life. I was never the kind of kid who ate a lot of junk food. When my friends were eating hamburgers, I was eating salads, but I was always really heavy. Mom took me from doctor to doctor for testing, and they all said that nothing was wrong with me, that I should eat healthier. It was so frustrating.

By the time I got to high school, I was 40 pounds overweight and whenever I ate, I felt sick. After dinner, I would not be able to do anything because I felt so sick, uncomfortable, unhappy, and tired. Dinner was the end of my night. I was so unhappy about my weight and how I felt. Mom told me, "I've heard of this doctor who might be able to help you. I'll call him right now if you want me to." I told her to make the call. She got Dr. Berkowitz on the phone.

Seeing Dr. Berkowitz was one of the best things that ever happened to me. He was the first doctor who talked to me in a way that made me feel comfortable. He told me that I deserved to feel healthy and energetic again. He told me that I did not deserve to feel sick all of the time. Those words were so comforting to hear.

carbohydrates, especially refined sugars, as body fat. As fat cells get larger, they require still more insulin to metabolize nutrients, which leads to even more fat storage and further weight gain. The more carbohydrates you consume, the higher insulin levels rise. This is why high-carbohydrate, low-fat diets actually provide the raw materials for weight gain.

The adrenal glands. These triangular glands sit on top of your kidneys. They make stress hormones (cortisol and adrenaline) and sex hormones (testosterone, estrogen, and progesterone). Daily stress triggers your adrenals to overproduce the hormone cortisol. By getting too little sleep, overworking yourself, or overexercising, you can eventually fatigue them and lose your ability to make the cortisol your body needs. When cortisol production falls, intense cardio can initiate the breakdown of protein stores, leading to a loss of muscle mass and an increase in fat mass. This is why exercise may not always be good for weight loss. Poor adrenal function also lowers levels of testosterone in men, progesterone in women, and DHEA in both sexes.

My tests revealed that my thyroid was a little slow and that I probably had yeast in my GI tract. He gave me lists of foods to eat and not eat and a list of supplements to take. Within a week I felt a lot better, and I progressively felt better as time went on. I was losing weight, too, but the weight loss wasn't what made me so happy. It was my health and how good I felt. My entire life was better.

As I was losing weight, my friends would tell me that they couldn't understand how I could give up foods like bread, but once I knew that it was the bread that made me feel bloated and sick, it stopped tasting as good to me. Once I made the connection to how bread, pasta, and other starchy foods affected me, it was a lot easier to not eat them because I felt a lot better when I avoided these foods.

Now that I have lost 40 pounds and improved my GI health, I can have small amounts of those starchy foods, but I know my limits. I have to stick to small portions. This isn't a death sentence. I can still have what I want, in moderation. I know that eating certain foods will make me sick; and if I'm sick, I'm not going to have a good time. I'd rather have a good time than eat unlimited amounts of certain foods.

Now I'm less self-conscious in social situations. I'm more outgoing and able to speak my mind. I enjoy life so much more.

This leads to weight gain, fatigue, low sex drive, insomnia, infertility (in women), and emotional instability (moodiness).

The thyroid gland. Thyroid hormone helps regulate metabolism, energy levels, mood, body temperature, and various bodily organs. If your thyroid is not functioning optimally, you will gain weight easily, resist weight loss, feel cold, become depressed, and suffer from dry skin, thin hair, low sex drive, joint and muscle aches, high cholesterol, and fatigue. The American College of Clinical Endocrinologists estimates that 1 in 10 Americans have an underactive thyroid and that half of them remain undiagnosed.

The sex hormones. You may be low in testosterone (if you are a man) or progesterone (if you are a woman) and high in estrogen for either sex. Fat cells store and secrete estrogen, so as you gain weight, estrogen levels rise, which interferes with testosterone and progesterone levels. Estrogen, like insulin, is a fat-storage hormone. When overly high, it also worsens blood sugar control.

The GI tract. There are more organisms living in your gut than there are cells in your body. Many of these organisms are good guys that synthesize vitamins and fatty acids, neutralize toxins, and make hormones. Others aren't. As they ferment the food you eat, they release toxins that can slow metabolism and make you feel fatigued.

Taking antibiotics, eating meat laced with antibiotics, eating too little fiber, or consuming too much sugar can throw off the delicate balance of bacteria and other organisms in your gastrointestinal tract. When antibiotics reduce levels of healthy bacteria or when sugar overfeeds yeast and unhealthy bacteria, levels of healthy bacteria drop and yeast and harmful bacteria proliferate. Yeast secretes toxins that weaken the immune system and cause the following symptoms: gas, diarrhea/ constipation, bloating, gastric reflux, post-nasal drip, brain fog, fatigue, increased appetite, headaches, rashes, and food allergies.

Research at Washington School of Medicine in St. Louis shows that an imbalance among the types of bacteria in the intestine can even cause you

to absorb more calories from the food you eat. The researchers found that overweight people tended to have lower levels of a type of intestinal bacteria called bacteroidetes and higher levels of another type of bacteria called *firmicutes*. Because the *firmicutes* bacteria do a better job of breaking down carbohydrates, they cause the body to soak up more calories from carbohydrate foods.

Despite popular belief, yeast overgrowth isn't something that only affects women. Plenty of men have it, too. We recently treated an executive who had been diagnosed with sleep apnea and was using a breathing machine to keep his windpipe open at night. It turned out that a yeast overgrowth in his GI tract was causing an excessive amount of post-nasal drip. Within 4 days of starting our diet, the man was no longer using his breathing machine, and his wife no longer complained of him snoring.

No matter which or how many bodily systems are not working the way they're supposed to, the end result is the same: Your metabolism stops working effectively, too.

WHY EATING LESS DOESN'T WORK

"Weight loss is easy. Just eat less."

Over the years, we must have said that to hundreds of patients, even though only a few were successful. We now know why. This conventional advice—eat less, exercise more—only works if your metabolism is in balance. For everyone else, the divide between wanting to eat less and actually managing to do it can be as wide as the Grand Canyon. If your metabolism is out of balance—as it is for 90 percent of the patients we see—calorie cutting and portion control will only make you hungrier, more tired, and eventually fatter.

Here's why. If you reduce calories the way the U.S. government and many medical establishments suggest, you do so mostly by reducing fat.

That means you're still consuming most of your calories from carbohydrates. All of the carbohydrates you eat turn into blood glucose, and, right now, your body probably does not handle blood glucose effectively. Until you fix your metabolism, a high-carbohydrate diet will cause blood glucose to quickly rise, which will cause your pancreas to pump out the hormone insulin, which will direct 85 percent of excess glucose into fat cells, causing blood glucose to drop and resulting in hunger, and starting the cycle all over again.

The same is true for exercise. Many physicians cause an endless amount of frustration by continually suggesting that their overweight patients start exercising. They tell you, "Move more and you'll burn more calories and build muscle mass. This will speed your resting metabolic rate and you'll lose weight." As with portion control, it sounds good in theory, but it doesn't always work. You probably don't need us to tell you this. Do you feel like going for a run right now? We didn't think so. Does exercise hurt? We thought so. Are you too tired to even think about moving your body? Yep, sounds familiar.

When your metabolism is not working efficiently, exercise fatigues an already overburdened system. Rather than improving metabolic function, it can often make it worse. In particular, it places a heavy burden on your adrenal glands—glands that are probably already exhausted. You can't fix your metabolism by willing yourself to exercise and praying and hoping that someday you'll be in shape. Rather, you must do the opposite. You must rest and repair. You must sleep, relax, and fix your metabolism with the right diet and supplements. Only once you make your metabolism more efficient can you start and maintain an exercise program.

Don't misunderstand us. We're not telling you not to exercise— ever. We're not saying that exercise is bad. We're only saying that it may be bad for you right now. Right now you need to concentrate your efforts on repairing the problem. Once you bring your metabolism back into balance, exercise will accentuate weight loss by bolstering metabolism and burning calories.

We hope you're relieved to know that you do not have a lack of willpower. You don't have a personality defect, either. We hope that you now understand that weight loss is hard. It's hard for everyone. We hope this realization allows you to shed some of the guilt, frustration, and anger you may feel about yourself and your body. We hope it allows you to maintain a sense of optimism. We hope that it allows you to maintain that dream, the one of the smaller, healthier, more energetic body. You can build it. We'll show you how.