FOOD FOR THOUGHT
DITCH THE DIET – IT IS ONLY MAKING YOU FATTER

Dr Nick Fuller, Research Director at Charles Perkins Centre, The University of Sydney, recently published Interval Weight Loss: How to Trick Your Body into Losing Weight One Month at a Time (Ebury Press). The goal is to lose a small amount of weight and then to take a break, maintaining the new body weight for a period of time before losing another small amount. Here he explains how it works.

“The reason diets don’t work and many people end up dieting themselves fatter and fatter is because we are tuned to a set body weight – a weight that our body feels most comfortable being. When we take our body out of that comfort zone through dieting or a reduction of energy intake, our body works to counteract the weight loss and in a state of stress the body’s innate response will be to store rather than offload weight.

This is in part a fight or flight response (in this instance, the energy restriction is the acute stress our body is responding to) and is core to the survival of the human species. The weight regain comes with a greater initial increase in fat mass. However, our body weight will often keep going up until our muscle mass stores are restored and what you end up with is a body that has a little extra fat storage to survive the next “starvation” (otherwise known as a diet) it has learned it needs to prepare for.

If you want to lose weight and keep it off forever, you need to trick your body into a new set point. That’s the basis of the Interval Weight Loss approach. Here’s how it works.
• Month 1: Aim to lose about 2kg (4lb 4oz), that’s around ½ a kilo (500 grams) or a bit over 1lb a week (17oz).
• Month 2: Maintain that new weight.
• Month 3: Aim to lose about 2kg (4lb 4oz).
• Month 4: Maintain that new weight.
• Month 5: Aim to lose about 2kg (4lb 4oz).
• Month 6: Maintain that new weight.

And to continue month by month with the above plan until you achieve your realistic goal weight. So, rather than activating the fight or flight response, the body is gently challenged to redefine its baseline body weight until you achieve your goal.”

Nick is currently leading an Interval Weight Loss challenge on Channel Ten’s Studio 10 which will guide five people through a controlled lifestyle plan, with lasting results. “The selected viewers will follow Interval Weight Loss for a year under my health care professional advice and we will show the Australian people how to actually go about weight loss,” he added, “and in the confines of their day to day lives, unlike the weight loss shows we are used to in the past, where contestants are taken to secluded environments and forced to do activities they cannot sustain.”

Read more:
• Intermittent energy restriction improves weight loss efficiency in obese men: the MATADOR study

WHAT’S NEW? GOOD CARBS CONSENSUS
The International Carbohydrate Quality Consortium (ICQC) released a public statement outlining the scientific consensus on the health benefits of eating wholegrain foods such as brown rice, oats, corn, barley and more in November 2017. Most of the studies the consensus statement was based on were observational as there are very few clinical trials in this area. However, a recent randomised cross-over trial with two 8-week dietary intervention periods comprising whole grain diets and refined grain diets, separated by a washout period of around 6 weeks, has found that a wholegrain diet will reduce energy intake and body weight and the low-grade systemic inflammation markers CRP and IL-6.

The process of milling and refining grains consists of separating and removing the bran and germ. This gives us a more shelf-stable and quicker cooking end product, but means it lacks many of the vitamins, minerals, fats, and fibre of the original grain.
Wholegrains are seeds and as food guru Harold McGhee says: “our most durable and concentrated foods ... the rugged lifeboats designed to carry a plant’s offspring to the shore of an uncertain future. Tease apart a whole grain, or bean, or nut, and inside you find a tiny embryonic shoot”. And that’s why they are so nourishing: they are a baby plant’s pantry. And that’s also why we along with insects, birds and animals seek them out.

"There are many positive studies showing that a lack of cereal fibre is associated with increased risk of colon cancer," says Prof Jennie Brand-Miller. “One body of thought is that when people consume carbohydrates without fibre it quickly raises insulin levels and the insulin stimulates the growth of mutant cells, such as colon cancer cells. "Insulin is this anabolic hormone that doesn't distinguish between good cells and bad cells, so the insulin is increasing the multiplication of mutant cells and sort of acting like fertiliser," explained Prof Miller. When you ingest the whole grain, she says, the body benefits from the "full compliment of micronutrients and antioxidants" like Vitamin E and C, which help slow down the process of free radicals.”

“Grains are at their most nourishing when we eat them as whole as possible or as the minimally processed staples our forebears enjoyed,” write Dr Alan Barclay et al in The Good Carbs Cookbook. “They certainly figure prominently in the diets of the long-living Blue Zones folks, and observational studies around the world suggest that eating plenty of wholegrain staples may reduce the risk of developing certain types of cancer, heart disease and type 2 diabetes. That’s why health professionals tend to worship at the altar of wholegrains and the words ‘consume more wholegrains’ are in dietary guidelines around the globe.”

Read more
- Whole grain-rich diet reduces body weight and systemic low-grade inflammation without inducing major changes of the gut microbiome: a randomised cross-over trial
- Download the ICQC Scientific Consensus on Whole Grains
- The Good Carbs Cookbook (Murdoch Books)

CAN DIETARY GUIDELINES SAVE THE PLANET?
To find the intersection of two contentious issues, look no further than the environment and dietary guidelines. On the environment, the current U.S. administration is busy wiggling out of commitments to reduce carbon emissions. On dietary guidelines, battles rage on multiple fronts – fats, red meat, and sugar are all hot topics. Undeterred, brave Dutch scientists have waded in and analyzed the potential impact of dietary guidelines on the environment. ConsclenHealth’s Ted Kyle reports.

What happens if people start following guidelines? That seems like an innocent question and that’s what Paul Behrens and colleagues tried to answer. They looked at 37 nations with 64% of the world’s population. They compared average diets in each of those countries with the diets recommended by the local government. The goal was to estimate the effect that following recommendations would have on land use, water pollution, and carbon emissions. Their answers are impressive. On all three measures they found significant improvements, just from following guidelines that each country has already adopted. If we eat a bit less meat, dairy, fats, and sugars, both the planet and its inhabitants will be a bit healthier. In
other words, “diets good for our health are also good for our planet,” says Professor Brian Morris of the University of Sydney.

Read more:
- Evaluating the environmental impacts of dietary recommendations
- US Dietary Guidelines
- Australian Dietary Guidelines

THE SIMPLICITY OF OBESITY AND THE MAGIC OF NUTRITION
Obesity is complex. Nutrition is important, but it isn’t magical, writes Ted Kyle in ConscienHealth. In the “magic of nutrition” world, however, obesity is simple. One pound of fat is the result of eating 3,500 calories. In this magical kingdom, the Mayo Clinic tells us: Your weight is a balancing act, but the equation is simple: If you eat more calories than you burn, you gain weight. Because 3,500 calories equals about 1 pound (0.45 kilogram) of fat, you need to burn 3,500 calories more than you take in to lose 1 pound.

More than 25 years ago, David Garner and Susan Wooley wrote that dietary approaches to obesity, by themselves, are inadequate for solving the problem. And yet this apparently comes as a revelation in a recent paper by David Benton and Hayley Young: Reducing calorie intake may not help you lose body weight.

Texas Tech University’s Prof Emily Dhurandhar tells us that she encounters shock when she teaches about the interaction of calories and human biology: Energy balance is dynamic and adaptable, but it is not above the first law of thermodynamics. You should see the look on their faces when I tell them the 3,500-calorie rule is wrong.

Shock and anger make people resistant to learning. And thus, we have policies to address obesity that have had little apparent impact. Public health experts tell us that we need only to cut 41 calories per day from the diets of children to solve the problem. So, we should not be surprised that obesity continues to rise, even among young children. Until we face facts and discard magical thinking, we will have little luck with reducing the health impact of obesity.

Read more:
- Reducing calorie intake may not help you lose body weight
- Blame, diversions and ten times more childhood obesity
- Sara Kirk: This is why child obesity rates have soared (The Conversation)
- ConscienHealth

GOING LOW GI GOT EASIER
Choosing healthy low GI carbohydrate foods is a key dietary choice. The Glycemic Index Foundation’s new website (gisymbol.com), provides a one-stop shop for healthy low GI living with recipes, meal plans, and downloadable resources. Research around the world over the past 35-plus years has clearly shown that by switching to eating mainly low GI carbs that trickle glucose into our bloodstream, we can reduce our day-long blood glucose and insulin levels thus helping us:
- Manage our appetite because we will feel fuller for longer
• Minimise our body fat
• Maximise our muscle mass
• Decrease our risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Why does it matter how high our BGL goes? As with blood pressure, there’s a healthy range and a risky range. Having BGLs in the normal range over the day is good for our body because it will also lower our day-long insulin levels. Having high BGLs from eating too many high GI foods can put pressure on our health, because it means that the pancreas has to work extra hard producing more insulin to move the glucose into the cells, where it provides energy for the body and brain. It’s not a good idea to overwork or overstress vital organs as they can wear out or stop functioning properly. We can’t easily replace a pancreas.

Here’s the 2-step approach going low GI.
• Step 1: Swap it: Replace the high GI foods in your diet with low GI ones. Find out how to do this HERE.
• Step 2: Don’t overload it: Keep those portions of carb-rich foods on your plate moderate to keep the glycemic load (GL) moderate. What’s moderate? It’s about a quarter of your dinner plate (inner rim) or 2–3 small, lower GI potatoes, ½ cup diced orange fleshed sweet potato or corn kernels or baked beans and ½ cup cooked basmati or other lower GI rice or pasta.

About the Glycemic Index Foundation (GIF). This is a not-for-profit health promotion charity that provides a range of scientifically backed resources based on low GI healthy eating principles. It is supported by Diabetes NSW and ACT and The University of Sydney.

Read more:
• Low glycaemic index, or low glycaemic load, diets for diabetes mellitus
• Initiative on gestational diabetes mellitus: A pragmatic guide for diagnosis, management, and care
• Low glycaemic index diets and blood lipids: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials
• The Diogenes study

PERSPECTIVES: DR ALAN BARCLAY

WHICH WEIGHT LOSS DIET HELPS YOU TO LOSE WEIGHT AND LIVE LONGER?

New year’s resolutions often include promises to lose weight. While increasing physical activity is commonly part of the equation, for most people, the burden of weight loss reduction focuses on the “diet”. The problem is, which diet? Around 2,500 new “diet” books are published each year – all proclaiming that their way is the only way to lose weight and keep it off. As there are only three major nutrients – fat, carbohydrate and protein – these “diets” typically manipulate (increase or decrease) one or two of these macronutrients to achieve the desired result. We only have to think about which diets have been popular over the past 50 years or so to understand what is going on: low-carb diets were fashionable in the 1970s; low-fat diets dominated the 80s and 90s; now “low carb” has made a comeback. Food is fad when it comes to “diets”.
But there are some good sound facts about “diets”. Over the past 50 years, nutrition scientists have carried out numerous randomized controlled trials investigating the effects of various weight-loss diets on body weight and mortality (yes, death) and the findings of these studies give us enough data to summarize their effects using systematic review and meta-analysis statistical techniques.

The most recent analysis looked at long-term studies (greater than one year) of adults with a BMI greater than 30kg/m² in people from a European background and BMI greater than 25kg/m² in people from other backgrounds including Asia and India. This meta-analysis clearly shows there is level 1 evidence that low-fat diets in combination with physical activity help people lose weight.

The researchers found 54 trials involving 30,206 people who were followed for up to 12 years. All but one of the trials included weight-loss interventions that were low fat (less than 30% of energy from fat), and most were also low in saturated fat. One study included the Mediterranean diet and one was very low carb (less than 50 grams of carb-containing foods a day). Most of the interventions included exercise advice or an exercise program.

After one year, the average weight reduction was 3.42kg (7.5lb); at 2 years it was 2.51kg (5.5lb); and at 3 years it was 2.56kg (5.6lb). It may not sound like a lot of weight, but these results are all statistically significant and equivalent to each person losing and keeping off at least five (500g/1.1lb) tubs of margarine or butter. This amount of weight loss was also enough to have some significant effects on the risk of premature death – a nearly 20% reduction in fact, or 6 lives saved per 1000 people.

We are the first to agree that one-size does not fit all when it comes to dietary patterns. But it is important to note that at this point in time, there is not equivalent level 1 evidence for the efficacy of long-term use of low-carb diets.

Read more:
- Effects of weight loss interventions for adults who are obese on mortality, cardiovascular disease, and cancer: systematic review and meta-analysis
- Effect of diet and exercise, alone or combined, on weight and body composition in overweight-to-obese post-menopausal women

Stop press:
- A High-Carbohydrate, High-Fiber, Low-Fat Diet Results in Weight Loss among Adults at High Risk of Type 2 Diabetes – I will cover this study in a future issue of GI News.

Alan Barclay PhD is a consultant dietitian. He worked for Diabetes Australia (NSW) 1998–2014. He is co-author of over 30 scientific publications, and author/co-author of The Good Carbs Cookbook and Reversing Diabetes (Murdoch Books), The Low GI Diet: Managing Type 2 Diabetes (Hachette Australia) and The Ultimate Guide to Sugars and Sweeteners (The Experiment Publishing, New York).

KEEPING IT GREEN – EATING FOR BODY AND PLANET
5 MORE SUSTAINABLE NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS

Have you made any New Year’s resolutions? If you resolved to lose weight, eat healthier and exercise more, you have just joined a very big club as lifestyle improvements are some of the most popular. This year, why don’t you consider environmental sustainability as well as your health? There are many things you can do that can help both at the same time.

Drive less Transportation is responsible for a hefty chunk of our energy-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (it’s about one-quarter in Australia and the USA). Try walking, cycling or even skating instead of driving as often as you can; it burns kilojoules/calories, it’s free and creates zero GHG emissions. And you can soak up more of your surroundings instead of whizzing straight past in a haze of exhaust fumes. Heck, you may smile and greet a stranger and create a bit more peace and harmony in the world while you’re at it. Catching public transport is better for the environment than driving a car and you usually have a little walk at the beginning and end of the journey.

Drink water Disposable plastic bottles made up a whopping one-quarter of the litter removed Australia-wide by Clean Up Australia Day volunteers. This is equal to 3600 tonnes of plastic containers in 2016 alone. To put this into perspective this is equal to the weight of around 1000 mid-sized cars. In the USA 40 million containers are estimated to be thrown away every day, and only 30% are recycled. These figures are horrifying when you think of where all these bottles end up: in landfill and our waterways. This year buy a reusable drink bottle and drink water instead of sugary drinks. If you must buy a plastic or glass container, please recycle it, even if you have to take it home first. This is a healthier option both for you and the environment.

Meat-less Monday A good steak is a great thing, but did you know animal foods make up a large portion of our food-footprint? Around 2kg of greenhouse gas emissions are made in the production of just 80g of lamb. The same emissions arise from a comparatively large 2kg of lentils. Not only are plant foods better for the environment; they are also great for our health, so this is a win-win. Make plant foods the basis of your diet and eat just enough of the animal foods your body requires and waste nothing.

Reduce packaging In some Sydney preschools, children are given re-usable sandwich bags and water bottles to help them achieve waste-free lunches when they go to ‘big school’. This helps reduce plastic in landfill and reduces litter in school playgrounds. A waste-free lunch is a worthy goal for grown-ups too. When you shop for snacks like muesli (granola) bars, nuts, canned fruit, dried fruit, milk and yoghurt, try to avoid individually wrapped items and instead make your own or buy in bulk and portion them out in re-usable containers. For the unavoidable soft plastic packaging waste, find out where you can recycle it. In Australia, the two major supermarkets have soft plastic recycling bins.

Fill your cup Disposable coffee cups are an environmental disaster. ABC’s War on Waste TV series revealed around 50,000 cups, enough to fill one Melbourne tram, are binned by Aussies every 30 minutes! The situation is likely to be similar in other coffee-loving countries. Contrary to popular belief, most disposable cups are not recyclable as they are lined with plastic to stop leaking. Why not have fewer coffees and treat yourself to a fair-trade barista-made coffee and drink it from your own personalised re-usable cup.
The un-plugged truth

- Take active transport whenever possible; that is, human powered rather than fossil fuel powered.
- Drink water in a re-usable bottle to save pollution and reduce empty kilojoules/calories in sweet drinks (soda).
- Enjoy a plant-based diet with just enough animal foods.
- Reduce your waste and your waistline by eating fewer packaged foods (and always recycle).
- Avoid disposable coffee cups and take your own re-usable cup.

Thanks to Rachel Ananin aka TheSeasonalDietitian.com for her assistance with this article.

Nicole Senior pulls the plug on hype and marketing spin to provide reliable, practical advice on food for health and enjoyment. She is an Accredited Nutritionist, author, consultant, cook, food enthusiast and mother who strives to make sense of nutrition science and delights in making healthy food delicious.

Contact: You can follow her on Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram or check out her website.

GOOD CARBS FOOD FACTS A TO Z

APPLES

We’re apple lovers to our core, smitten at first bite. There’s that sharp “crack!” as you break the crispy skin and then a mouthful of juicy, slightly grainy flesh. Although available year-round, new season apples appear in the produce aisles from late summer through autumn. And that’s when they are at their crisp and crunchy, sweet and juicy best. Did you know that the plants that eventually produced apple trees were among the first flowering plants on earth evolving about 4.5 million years ago in Central Asia.

The wild apple (Malus sieversii), ancestor of most cultivars of the domesticated apple (M. domestica), is still producing tasty apples on the slopes of Central Asia’s Tian Shan mountains. Domestic apples are grown on every continent (apart from Antarctica), which is why they are so readily available to pack in lunch boxes; grate over muesli; slice into salads; braise with caraway and cabbage; serve with pork; and lovingly bake into muffins, pies and tarts.

Fruit bowl or fridge? Keep apples cold to prevent them from ripening further. Since most apples are picked at peak ripeness, additional “ripening” actually means “decaying”—and this process speeds up tenfold when the fruit is left at room temperature. But to enjoy that juicy, crisp, texture you need to store them in plastic bags in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator rather than in a fruit bowl on the bench. They will keep this way for many weeks. It is a dilemma if your approach is “if it’s healthy keep it handy”.

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We think it’s a good idea to have the best of both. Keep most of the apples in the refrigerator and put a few in a small bowl to encourage the family to snack on good carbs rather than heading for the cookie jar.

So, while the so-called exotic super fruits are winning all the plaudits these days, Nicole Senior reckons that “apples are the everyday hero with good levels of fibre, vitamin C and potassium and the highest levels of antioxidants of all the commonly eaten (and more affordable) fruits”.

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Source: [USDA](https://www.usda.gov)
IN THE GI NEWS KITCHEN
FROM THE GOOD CARBS COOKBOOK

Good Carbs Cookbook by Dr Alan Barclay, Kate McGhie and Philippa Sandall (Murdoch Books, RRP $39.99)
Photography by Alan Benson

LAMB SHANKS WITH GARDEN PEAS AND MINT
Lamb and pearl barley are a natural pairing and 1 large shank is enough for two people generally, though it depends how hungry they are. This is a one-pot meal you can prepare quickly and leave to gently cook. Add tiny whole carrots, peeled garlic cloves and extra onions with the barley if you like. Prep: 15 minutes • Cook 2 hours • Serves 6

1 tablespoon (20ml) olive oil.
4 large lamb shanks.
1 brown onion, chopped.
About 4 cups (1 litre) chicken stock.
1½ cups pearl barley.
1½ cups garden peas.
1 handful mint leaves, fresh.
1 large orange, zest and juice.
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper.

Preheat the oven to 180ºC/350ºF (fan 160ºC/315ºF). • Place a large casserole dish on the stovetop over medium-high heat. Pour in the oil and, when hot, add the shanks to brown all over, turning occasionally, for about 8 minutes. Push the shanks to the side of the dish slightly and reduce the heat. Add the onion and cook for about 8 minutes, or until golden. Pour in the stock, bring to a lively simmer, cover and place in the oven for about 1½ hours, or until the shanks are tender. • Rinse the barley, drain and add it to the casserole dish, making sure it is covered in liquid. If not, add a little more stock. Cover and cook for about 25–30 minutes, or until barley is al dente, adding the peas in the last 5 minutes of cooking. Roughly chop half the mint and stir it in with the orange zest and juice, and salt and pepper to taste. Using forks, pull the meat from the bone and serve with the barley and pea mixture, garnished with the remaining mint leaves.

Per serve
1665kJ/400 calories; 27g protein; 13.5g fat (includes 5g saturated fat; saturated : unsaturated fat ratio 0.56); 37.5g available carbs (includes 4g sugars and 33.5g starches); 8g fibre; 560mg sodium; 630mg potassium; sodium : potassium ratio 0.89

STICKS, SEEDS, PODS & LEAVES
Kate Hemphill’s recipes. Kate contributed the recipes to Ian Hemphill’s best-selling Spice and Herb Bible. You will find more of her recipes on the Herbies spices website. Or you can follow her on Instagram (@herbieskitchen). Kate uses Herbies spices and blends, but you can substitute with what you have in your pantry.
BROWN RICE TUNA POKE BOWL WITH FURIKAKE

The poke bowl is the dish of the moment – full of healthy ingredients and great flavour. The possibilities are endless, just combine your favourite veg and protein, use the citrus & soy dressing, and top with Furikake Japanese seasoning (Japanese seasoning, umami sprinkle). It contains toasted sesame seeds, black sesame seeds, sea salt, nori flakes (nagai, sea lettuce, Ulva spp.), minced red chilli, orange peel, sansho powder and a little sugar.

• Prep time: 15 mins • Cook time: 5 mins • Serves: 2

250g (9oz) sashimi grade tuna fillet, cut into 1cm (½in) dice
250g (2 cups) cooked short grain brown rice
1 carrot, grated or spiralised
½ cup fresh soy beans (shelled edamame)
½ cup finely sliced red cabbage
10 snow peas, finely sliced
2 tbsp (30ml) pickled ginger
4 spring onions, finely sliced
1–2 tsp Herbie’s Furikake Seasoning

Dressing:
⅓ cup lemon juice
⅓ cup light soy sauce
¼ cup lime juice
2 tbsp (30ml) soy sauce
2 tsp sesame oil

Combine dressing ingredients, then pour half over tuna dice and refrigerate for 10 minutes while preparing salad. • To assemble bowl, place rice on the bottom then top with vegetables; pour over remaining dressing, then top with tuna, spring onions and furikake. • Serve immediately.

Per serve
2210kJ/530 calories; 45g protein; 9g fat (includes 2g saturated fat; saturated : unsaturated fat ratio 0.29); 58g available carbs (includes 10g sugars and 48g starches); 12g fibre; 1729mg sodium; 1332mg potassium; sodium : potassium ratio 1.30
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