

# Healthy Weight Loss

## Addressing underlying causes beyond diet and exercise

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It can be terribly frustrating when your body just seems to hold on to those extra 10-20 pounds, no matter how well you eat and how much you exercise. A holistic approach to weight loss will help you to address underlying health issues and will make this uphill battle a little easier for you. Let's explore a few of the hidden causes of stubborn weight.

The following are 5 of the most common underlying causes that I see in my practice:

### **1) Your healthy diet actually isn't as healthy as you think it is (Food sensitivities)**

Sometimes a certain food might be healthy for one person, but not work well for another. Omnivore or vegetarian, raw or cooked, paleo or low fat can all be healthy in the right situation. Some specific foods might contribute to inflammation and weight in some people: sugar, gluten, dairy, soy, corn, eggs and nightshades are common ones. Try varying your diet for 2 weeks at a time to see how your body responds to different versions of "healthy" eating.

### **2) Your digestive system is out of whack causing a bloated belly (IBS)**

When your digestive system is not functioning optimally, it might not be processing your foods correctly. This can lead to bloating and weight gain that typically worsens over the course of the day and is better in the morning after an overnight fast.

### **3) Your adrenals are storing energy for you, just in case (Adrenal Fatigue)**

When you are under stress, your body doesn't know the difference between an angry boss, an upcoming deadline and a famine. Your body stores extra energy,

just in case. And it stores is as belly fat. Managing your stress and supporting your adrenals can help assure your body that it is safe to let go of those extra energy stores.

#### **4) Your low thyroid function is causing a sluggish metabolism (Hypothyroid)**

Regular blood tests that come back “normal” might be missing the more subtle versions of hypothyroidism. Fatigue, low mood, dry skin, weight gain, constipation, dry thinning hair and puffy water retention can all be signs of an underactive thyroid. A more comprehensive thyroid panel and optimum hormone levels (not just “normal”) can detect if this is contributing to your problems.

#### **5) Your female hormones are out of balance (Perimenopause, Menopause, PCOS, Estrogen dominance)**

Imbalanced female hormones can also lead to weight gain in a variety of ways. You may have experienced the fluctuations that can happen throughout a monthly cycle, which are often due to water weight rather than fat.

Progesterone is a natural diuretic so this swelling can happen any time your estrogen is too high compared to progesterone. Then in menopause when estrogen levels drop, your body may need a few pounds of extra fat because the fat cells actually help to make the hormones that the ovaries are no longer making. This system can be complicated so get help if you feel your female hormones need better balance.

And no matter what the reason is for your stubborn weight, it's essential to make peace with your body and learn to love and appreciate yourself just the way you are. Care for your body tenderly, even as you strive to improve it. Many women are perfectly healthy with some extra pounds that their body just seems to need at this time. When I'm working with patients, I always emphasize overall health and fitness first. Then weight loss is more of a side effect.