

TAMING THE HUNGER HORMONE



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The Hunger Hormone

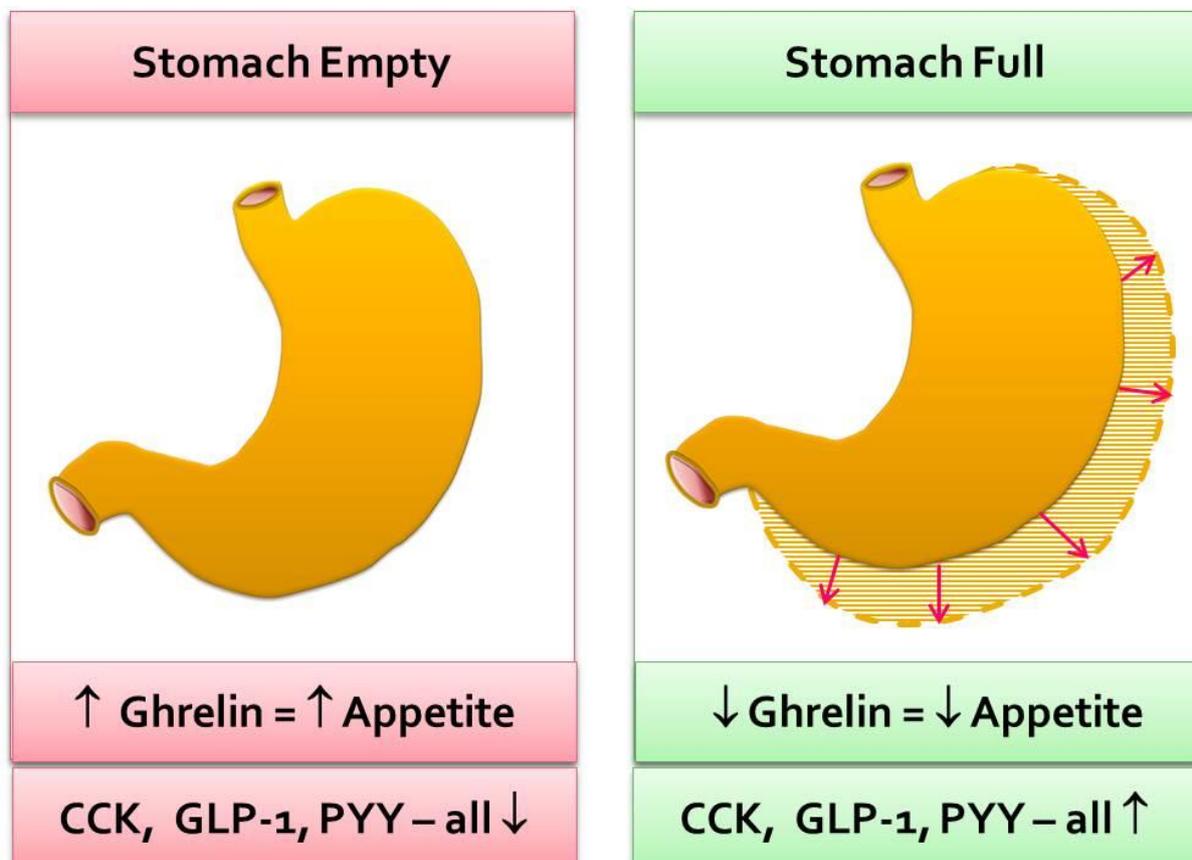
When you're trying to lose weight, the number one enemy is hunger. If we didn't get hungry losing weight would be a piece of cake (preferably not literally).

To have a constant weight, there must be an energy balance; energy intake has to be equal to energy expenditure. However, when the energy balance gets disturbed, this can lead to weight gain. Therefore, many investigators try to identify the mechanisms behind the imbalance between energy intake and energy expenditure.



Body weight is regulated by a complex system, including many hormones. One of the hormones that plays an important role in the regulation of food intake and body weight is ghrelin. Ghrelin signals hunger to the hypothalamus. In the hypothalamus, activation of the ghrelin receptor initiates different signalling cascades leading to changes in food intake. As ghrelin systems are disturbed in people who are obese, it is important to reveal their mechanism of action for the purpose of developing effective dietary and lifestyle strategies.

Ghrelin, is made by cells in the stomach and released in the bloodstream in ever-increasing amounts before meals. The longer one goes between meals, the more ghrelin will be released and the more stimulation there will be for hunger. Directly after a meal ghrelin drops off.



Ghrelin is termed the ‘hunger hormone’ because it stimulates appetite, increases food intake and promotes fat storage. When administered to humans, ghrelin increases food intake by up to 30%.

Since ghrelin induces a person to eat it might be easy to point the finger at this hormone and claim it is responsible for over-eating, and thus, obesity. However, a study published in The New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) showed the ghrelin levels are actually lower in obese individuals compared to their lean counterparts. This suggests that there are more factors at play.

Furthermore, those with anorexia nervosa have high amounts of circulating ghrelin, thereby suggesting it’s not the only issue for those with weight management issues. Ghrelin also is involved in regulating fat oxidation (burning) and fat accumulation in the body. When ghrelin levels are high centrally, in the hypothalamus- like when you’re hungry, fat burning slows down and fat accumulation machinery gears up for the influx of calories the body thinks is coming. Perhaps this is part of the mechanism behind why “starving” oneself is not a good diet strategy.

In addition, ghrelin levels show a natural variation throughout the day and seem to be influenced by age, gender, BMI, growth hormone (GH), glucose, leptin and insulin.

So ghrelin functions as an appetite-stimulatory signal.

Regulators of Circulating Ghrelin

	Effect on circulating ghrelin
Food intake	↓
Age	↓ with increasing age
Gender	Higher in females compared with males
Leptin	↓
Growth hormone	↓
Glucose	↓
Insulin	↓

Taming the Hunger Hormone

Clearly we need to stop dieting. Research consistently shows that dieters put on more weight than they lose. And as you can see, one of the primary reasons for this happening is ghrelin. When we restrict our food intake, ghrelin makes us feel very uncomfortable.

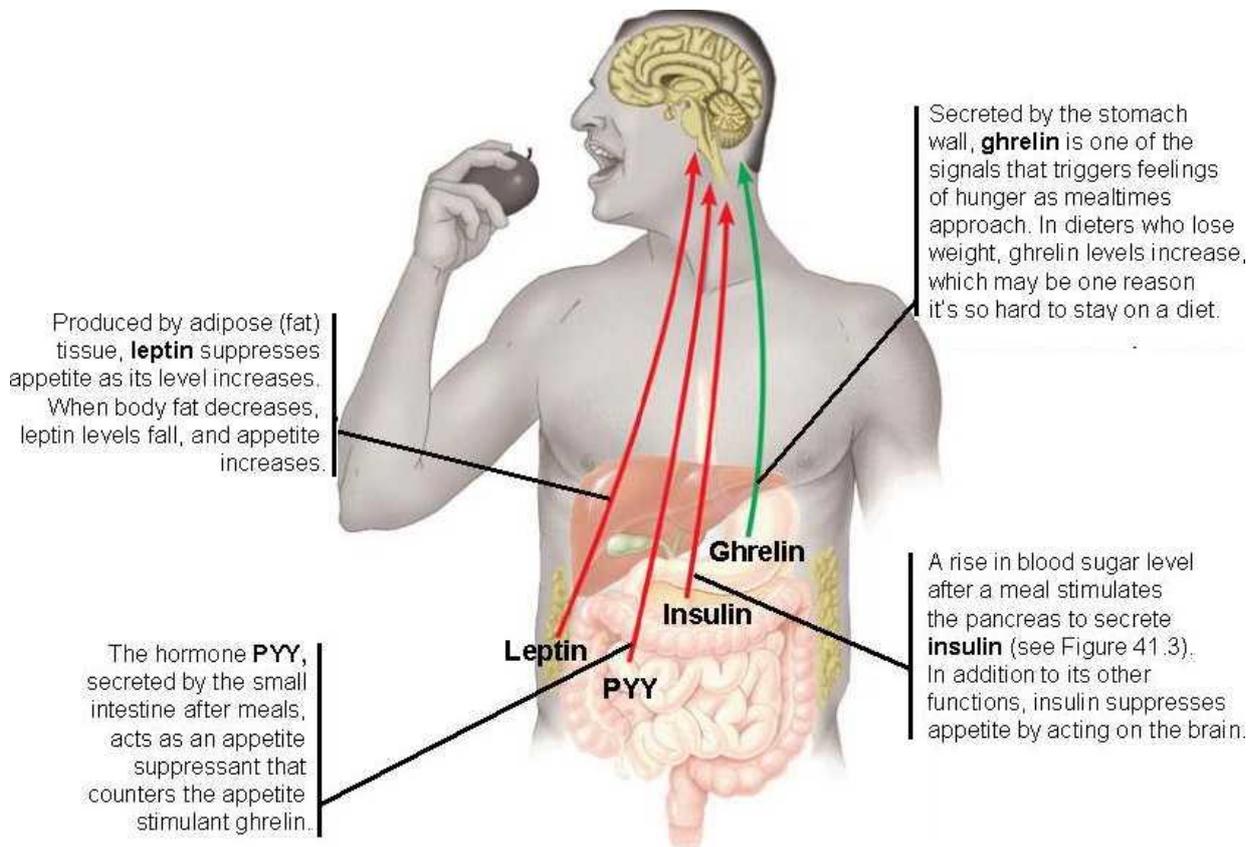
We really have no control of factors such as our age or our gender. But the above influencers do explain why it is that men find it easier to lose weight than women.

However, we do have control over other factors, such as our production of leptin, growth hormone, insulin and our blood glucose levels.

The question then becomes – how can we eat in a way that optimises/normalises leptin, growth hormone, blood glucose and insulin and so lowers ghrelin production?

Well, research shows that a low fat, high carbohydrate, high fibre diet does all of those things, where-as a high fat, low carbohydrate, low fibre diet will throw all these finely balanced systems into chaos. And that's fantastic news for you carb addicts out there.

Yes. You can eat all the potatoes, kumara, rice, oats and fruit you want to. These items are not the problem. It's the cheese, butter, fried foods, processed junk foods and animal products that are the real problem.



This may be hard to believe, as carbo-phobia (yes, that's a real thing) runs rampant in our society. We've been told for so long that carbs are the cause of all our problems with our weight, but the truth is that it's due to the company that carbs keep.

Most carbohydrates come to us in the company of fat. Just think about it – pizza with pepperoni and cheese, baked potatoes and sour cream, fish and chips, potato crisps; and then we consume carbohydrates as edible food like products in the form of cakes, biscuits, bread and crackers that are devoid of fibre.

And despite the low carb claims, the research does not support a low carb approach for long term weight loss or health.

So get munching and carb up.



Hopefully you've also registered for your free seat in the "Balance Your Hormones to Master Your Weight" webinar.

If not, it's not too late. You can visit:

<http://WebinarMeetingRoom.com/10108/yqltrfya1/webinar-register.php?trackingID1=XXXXXXXX&trackingID2=YYYYYYYY&landingpage=default&expiration=default>

Choose your preferred day and time and click on the "Register Now" button.

In this webinar I'll be sharing with you four other hormones that are instrumental in your weight management. You'll learn about leptin, insulin, estrogen and cortisol and the role each of them plays in controlling your hunger, fat burning and fat distribution, so that you can learn to feel full without feeling fat, get rid of stubborn belly fat, lose weight after menopause and improve your health at the same time.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Love, peace and mung bean sprouts

Cath King



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