



► Insulin Resistance: The Real Reason You Can't Lose Weight

When secreted in excess, insulin drives fat storage, but with changes in diet and lifestyle this can be reversed, and weight loss can be the result

By Christine M. Okezie, CHHC, Natural Food Chef

EAT LESS AND EXERCISE MORE! THAT HAS BEEN THE bedrock of advice for the last 40 years, served up by some very powerful industries and institutions who tell us weight loss is simply a function of calories in equals calories out, so what we need is more willpower, self-control and to break free of our sedentary lifestyles. America's skyrocketing obesity and metabolic disease rates are sobering evidence this outdated advice is simply not working.

To be clear, saying weight gain is caused by excess calories is scientifically correct, however it is essentially meaningless because it tells you nothing about the actual cause. *Why are people eating more? Why are people storing more fat instead of burning it? Why are people putting on more belly fat? Why are people constantly craving sugar and carbs?*

Blaming excess calorie intake on gluttony or laziness disregards the complex physiological



*Christine M. Okezie,
Certified Holistic Health
Counselor and Natural
Foods Chef, [www.
yourdeliciousbalance.com](http://www.yourdeliciousbalance.com)*

crazy hormones

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processes at play. The updated science proves different foods impact key hormones that directly affect our fat storage, calorie burning and appetite control. *In other words, being overweight is not simply a matter of caloric imbalance. It's a hormonal imbalance.*

And the number one hormonal balance affecting 80-100 million people in the U.S. when it comes to excess weight is Insulin Resistance, the clinical condition also known as pre-diabetes, Syndrome X or Metabolic Syndrome. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas whose job is to regulate blood sugar levels in our body and metabolize fat. When insulin is secreted in excess, it drives fat storage.

An abundance of research shows the common link in obesity and all chronic metabolic disease essentially boils down to the body's inability to properly handle sugar. A high insulin level is a critical first warning sign. While many insulin resistant people may never get full blown Type 2 Diabetes, they are at the same severe risk for heart disease, stroke, dementia, PCOS, cancer, depression and autoimmune disease.

So here is what happens in the body. The food we eat gets broken down into proteins, micro-nutrients and sugars. The sugars are converted into glucose to be used as our basic fuel for our cells. Insulin's job is to tell our cells to open up and absorb the glucose for energy. If our cells

resist this process for reasons explained further below, glucose and insulin levels remain elevated in our blood resulting in fat storage (i.e. belly fat), inflammation and a cascade of hormonal changes that wreaks havoc on our mood, appetite and metabolism.

Also, because our insulin resistant cells are literally starved of fuel, we feel fatigued, hungry all the time, crave sugar and carbs, and the vicious cycle of weight gain ensues. So when it comes to weight, as long as your insulin levels are high, you will fight a losing battle counting calories. If you are insulin resistant, cutting back on portion size and exercising 30 minutes a day won't budge the scale after an initial few pounds. To sum up, controlling insulin and blood sugar levels is one of the most powerful ways to reduce your risk for obesity and chronic disease.

THE CAUSES

Family history of Type 2 Diabetes or gestational diabetes, obesity (especially around the belly), early heart disease and hypertension can play a role, but food and lifestyle factors are the primary cause of insulin resistance.

■ **Excessive Sugar Intake** — Our diets affect our metabolism, and a diet consisting mostly of excessive sugar from refined and processed foods results in the fast breakdown of sugars that quickly enter the bloodstream. As this



occurs, the body pumps out more insulin to try to control the glucose levels, creating a downward spiral.

■ **Poor Quality Fats in Our Food** — Trans fatty acids in partially hydrogenated vegetable oils abundant in processed foods can cause insulin resistance. When these man-made fats get into the cell membrane, they interfere with the insulin receptors.

■ **Poor Gut Health** — There has been an explosion of research showing our intestinal ecology of 100 trillion bacteria is a big driver in obesity and metabolic disease. Bad bugs in the gut may increase the production of insulin. Studies show the makeup of gut flora in people who are obese and diabetic differs from that of people who are normal weight and have no metabolic disease.

■ **Chronic Stress** — Under stress, the body produces adrenaline and cortisol, which raise blood sugar levels and allow the body to react with a “fight or flight” response. Over time, unmanaged stress, emotional or physical, keeps cells in an insulin-resistant state for long periods of time.

■ **Environmental Toxicity** — Toxins in our everyday products known as endocrine disrupting chemicals or “EDCs” found in plastics, cookware, cleaning products and personal care products are linked to insulin resistance.

■ **Sleep Deprivation** — Studies show that lack of sleep impairs the ability of fat cells to respond to insulin.

EARLY DETECTION

The scary fact is 90 percent of people with pre-diabetes are never diagnosed by their doctor. It's important to know damage begins with slight changes in blood sugar and insulin. Standard blood tests might reveal that you have normal blood sugar levels, but they will not reveal high insulin levels unless you measure insulin and request the 2-Hour Glucose Tolerance / Insulin Response Test.

Don't Miss the Early Warning Signs:

- Fasting blood sugar over 87
- Family history Type 2 Diabetes
- Over age 50



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Recipe: Shrimp Pad Thai (Grain Free)

Yield: Serves 4

Ingredients:

- 1 4lb spaghetti squash
- 1 teaspoon coconut oil (melted or spray)
- ½ cup cilantro, finely chopped
- 1 large carrot, grated
- 2 medium scallions, thinly sliced

To Cook Shrimp:

- 2 teaspoons coconut oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- 1lb raw shrimp, peeled

Sauce:

- 1 tablespoon ginger root, grated
- ½ teaspoon garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons tamari
- 1 tablespoon Thai fish sauce

- 1 ½ tablespoons organic peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon fresh squeezed lime juice
- ¼ cup water

Procedure:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Cut spaghetti squash in half and scoop out seeds. Spray cut open halves with coconut oil. Season with salt and pepper. Place on a baking sheet and roast for 45 minutes to an hour until fork tender.
2. When the squash is done and cool enough to handle, gently scrape squash with a fork to remove flesh in long strands and transfer to a medium bowl.
3. While squash is baking, make the sauce. Combine all ingredients in a blender or mini food processor until liquefied. Set aside.
4. To cook the shrimp: In a medium sauté pan, heat coconut oil over medium heat, add garlic and shrimp and cook until shrimp is no longer translucent (approx. 3-4 minutes).
5. Add the spaghetti squash to the sauté pan with the shrimp and toss lightly. Pour the sauce along with cilantro, carrots and scallions. Mix well and serve immediately.

- Increasing belly fat
- Fatigue after meals
- Abnormal cholesterol & triglycerides
- Hypertension

The good news is, insulin resistance is 100 percent reversible by aggressively changing your food and lifestyle, which is why early detection is so important. The first step is to avoid the following:

- Sugar, sugary liquids, all flour, processed packaged foods
- Chemical fats (vegetable oil, soybean oil)
- Low-fat/no-fat packaged foods
- Artificial sweeteners
- All food containing high fructose corn syrup
- All foods containing hydrogenated oils

Next, begin eating the following foods:

- Eat whole, real anti-inflammatory foods
- Eat high quality proteins and fats in abundance
- Minimize grain and flour products

- Don't skip meals
- Eat fat, fiber, protein at every meal
- Commit to sleep
- Exercise: Aim for 30 minutes daily of vigorous exercise
- Commit to finding a Mind Body Practice (yoga, tai chi, meditation)

ABOUT CHRISTINE M. OKEZIE

Christine M. Okezie is a graduate of the Natural Gourmet Institute for Health and Culinary Arts in New York, and the Institute for Integrative Nutrition. She founded her company, Your Delicious Balance, to counsel individuals to heal themselves through real food and positive lifestyle choices. Her healing strategies are based on whole foods nutrition, and she guides her clients to adopt a plant-centered way of eating that offers anti-inflammatory and detoxifying benefits to the body. For more information, visit her Web site at www.yourdeliciousbalance.com or call (201) 889-5001.

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"The No Diet Cookbook: Learn to Eat for Health and Pleasure," by Christine M. Okezie

