[IMAGE]

How To Kickstart Your Metabolism

By Julie T. Chen, MD

Many people think that metabolism is only affected by exercise. That is not true.

It is true though that exercise is essential for losing weight, maintaining weight loss, and for overall health. But it is not the only way to achieve all three goals.

Our diet is a big part of how our body functions and hence how efficient our metabolism is. When we eat foods that are high in glycemic load or high in carbohydrate/sugars, if our body doesn't process these well, it works against our weight loss efforts.

So, for those of you looking to start this year off on the right foot regarding kick-starting your metabolism and losing weight, look for foods that are low in glycemic load or index. Foods that don't spike our sugar quickly then drop quickly are better for weight loss efforts.

Another aspect of foods that you should look into is whether a food has higher protein content and higher fiber content. These will help you with weight loss as well as keeping your energy and sugar at a stable level so that you have more energy to be active.

Kickstart Metabolism - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark In some studies, green tea was found to be helpful with increasing metabolism. Other epidemiological studies regarding green tea also suggest other health benefits of green tea including cancer prevention and heart disease. So, if you want a food that helps your metabolism, why not choose one that also helps your body battle against disease.

In other studies, spicy foods were also seen to have a beneficial effect on metabolism. Since spices have some anti-inflammatory benefits, the fact that you're adding spices and giving your food a little kick will likely not only help kick-start your metabolism, but also help your body kick those colds and pesky illnesses.

I know there are a lot of commercials out there that taut the impressive changes our body makes from weight loss supplements and drinks but most studies have shown that these are not all that helpful if your diet is poor. So, I always have patients start by cleaning up their diet because no supplement can take on and

reverse the negative effects of a monsoon of fatty processed foods. Your metabolism will not be efficient in that monsoon even if you have the tiny umbrella of a weight loss supplement because those fatty sugary foods will be too overwhelming.

I always tell my patients in my clinic of Integrative Medicine in San Jose CA that Mother Nature was very smart in how she made foods for our body. Many times, the foods that are healthy also help your body be more efficient at burning the fuel; because ultimately, food is meant as fuel for our body so that we can be efficient and effective at our daily life activities.

So, when you eat an anti-inflammatory diet that is not processed and is low in saturated fat and low in sugars but is high in protein, antioxidants, and fiber, your body is more balanced to fight diseases but it also has more energy to tackle your daily life. When your body is acting like this type of a well-oiled machine, it too is like a well-oiled machine…at burning calories that is.

Dr. Julie T. Chen is board-certified in internal medicine and fellowship-trained and board-certified in integrative medicine. She has her own medical practice in San Jose, Calif. She is the medical director of corporation wellness at several Silicon Valley-based corporations, is on several medical expert panels of Web sites and nonprofit organizations, is a recurring monthly columnist for several national magazines, and has been featured in radio, newspaper, and magazine interviews. She incorporates various healing modalities into her practice including, but is not limited to, medical acupuncture, Chinese scalp acupuncture, clinical hypnotherapy, strain-counterstrain osteopathic manipulations, and biofeedback. To learn more, visit www.makinghealthyez.com.

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