

# THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION

BY ERIC R. BRAVERMAN, MD

# Q

Is weight loss really just a question of mind over matter?

# A

There is a mind-body connection when it comes to weight loss, but it involves more than “will power.” The brain is our most important organ,

and if it is not working at its best, it will not promote a healthy body. There are so many diets on the market that are just focused on caloric intake and fat counts. I wrote the *Younger (Thinner) You Diet* to address the brain and how to maximize its functioning.

Weight gain affects the endocrine, musculoskeletal, cardiopulmonary, vascular, digestive, and reproductive systems, the kidneys, and skin—basically the entire body. The extra fat slows down all the other internal organ systems, and thus accelerates the aging process.

Obesity is an imbalance in four key brain chemicals. Our brain controls our body. When our brain chemistry is out of whack, and we are deficient in the feel-good neurotransmitters (serotonin, dopamine, GABA, and acetylcholine), we are going to self-medicate on foods that will spike one of these neurotransmitters. Our cravings for certain foods are associated with specific brain chemistry imbalances—all of which can be corrected by eating a diet that matches brain chemistry type.

Amino acids can also impact brain chemistry and weight loss. Arginine, carnitine, glutamine, lysine, phenylalanine, taurine, tryptophan, and tyrosine all have weight loss effects and the

ability to boost metabolism. Supplemental amino acids should be taken on an empty stomach.

## Foods That Promote Weight Loss

Include a rainbow of fruits and vegetables in your diet, and eat the right balance of proteins, complex carbs, and essential fats in order to stay not just thin, but healthy. Avoid salt and sugar, and eat the specific foods corresponding to the brain chemicals in which you are deficient.

A diet that isn't right for your brain chemistry will age you and slow your metabolism. Anything processed, refined, or pesticide- or toxin-loaded will accelerate aging. Yes, that diet cola containing artificial sweeteners is actually making you fat and old! Chemicals mess with brain chemistry and wreak havoc on appetite control.

## Weight-Loss Supplements

Key supplements that turn on the fat-burning hormones include CLA, Integra-Lean Irvingia (try Life Extension), and omega-3s. Also, curcumin and resveratrol combat the inflammation associated with obesity. And always drink tea in every color and flavor, and add spices to food—they contain 0 calories, are loaded with nutrients, and increase metabolism.

## MEET OUR EXPERT

Eric Braverman, MD, is the author of the New York Times bestseller *Younger (Thinner) You Diet: How Understanding Your Brain Chemistry Can Help You Lose Weight, Reverse Aging, and Fight Disease*. He is a columnist for the Huffington Post and clinical assistant professor of Integrative Medicine in Neurological Surgery at New York Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center. He has been practicing medicine for more than 22 years.

