

Fat Around the Middle (e-book)



Discover the real reasons for your weight, give up dieting and get slim and healthy naturally

Marilyn Glenville PhD

Fat Around the Middle E-book

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Fat Around the Middle (e-book)

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The Natural Health Practice

In this e-book you will discover how to achieve and maintain your ideal weight, healthily and naturally.

We trust you will find the information you read here both helpful and practical on a day-to-day basis.

This e-book has been designed to give you as much useful information as possible in order for you to be able to help yourself and make a difference to your health and the way that you feel.

At the end of this e-book there are some links to other resources that you might find helpful at this time.

Happy reading.

Free health tips

If you would like to receive my exclusive Health Tips by email, drop me a line at health@marilynglenville.com. Just mention 'Free Health Tips' in the subject line and you will be added to my special list to receive regular health tips and other useful information.

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Disclaimer

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Fat Around The Middle

If you're apple- rather than pear-shaped, with a tendency to gather fat around your waist, you'll know how difficult it is to keep slim. What you may not know is how dangerous the fat around your middle really is (more so than fat on your thighs or bottom), increasing your risk of diabetes, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and certain cancers.

Because of where the fat sits on your body, normal diets, even rigorous exercise regimes rarely work.

However I have devised a simple lifestyle plan that does.

Follow my recommendations and you will not only get rid of fat around your middle, but you will also be doing the best you possibly can to prevent health problems in the future.

Short term, you get to look better. Long term? You live longer. It's as simple as that.

How?

The aim is to change your body's underlying biochemistry so that it gets the message that it is OK to let go of the fat it is choosing to store around the middle of your body.

What's the cause?

The main reason some people gather more fat around their middle than others is specifically because of the action of the stress hormone cortisol.

The fight or flight response

Millions of years ago, our bodies were designed to react quickly to danger. Like wild animals we were on constant alert so we could run or fight if threatened. When your brain thinks your life is in danger it stimulates the release of adrenaline and cortisol that trigger the following reactions:

- Your heart speeds up and your blood pressure rises
- The clotting ability of your blood increases (in case you are injured)

- Your digestion shuts down
- Your liver immediately releases emergency stores of glucose into the bloodstream to give you instant energy to fight or run
- Your immune system produces more white blood cells to fight foreign viruses or bacteria

This fight or flight response is incredibly clever and thoroughly efficient. It provides instant energy for 5-10 minutes allowing you to react swiftly to dangerous situations.

The problem is our lives have completely changed but evolution is lagging a little behind. Our bodies still react in the same way but to modern stresses such as deadlines, traffic jams, tantruming children, and not spear-wielding aggressors or sabre-tooth tigers.

Modern stress

These days, many of us live under chronic stress. But our bodies can't distinguish between late trains, missed appointments, spiralling debt, infuriating work colleagues, family disputes and the truly life-threatening stress it gears up to challenge. So it reacts exactly the same as it's always done.

The problem with many modern lifestyles is that stress (our 'perceived threat') is almost continuous and comes without the natural release that either fighting or fleeing might provide. Unless you do something physical (as your body is expecting you to) all that extra energy, in the form of fat and glucose, has nowhere to go. It must be simply re-deposited as fat.

Stress food cravings

After a stressful event cortisol levels in the blood often remain high for a while, effectively increasing your appetite because your body thinks you should refuel after all this fighting or fleeing. This means people under constant stress quite often feel constantly hungry. Worse, their body urges them to stock up on the foods it thinks will be most useful after all that 'activity' - carbohydrates and fats.

It's just the sort high-sugar, high-fat comfort and convenience food many people crave.

The fat around the middle connection

If you don't fight or flee when your body expects you to, the fat and glucose swimming around your system get deposited as fat – around the middle of your body. And if you eat something sugary or fatty as a consequence of the post-stress appetite surge, any weight you gain as a result, will be around your middle too.

The reason fat targets the middle is because it is close to the liver where it can most quickly be converted back into energy if needed. There it provides the body with protection ready for the next stress attack.

Your body is only trying to help. To continue providing the energy it thinks you need, it tries to keep a convenient fat store ready for constant use and creates cravings and increases appetite to ensure good supplies of necessary fuel.

How much stress is bad for you?

Some people cope with huge levels of stress, others crumple at the slightest trigger. The important factor, in terms of fat distribution, is how YOUR body reacts to and copes with stress. The chances are, if you are apple-shaped, you will have a tendency to produce more cortisol under stress than someone who is pear shaped.

Hurried woman syndrome

Unfortunately, women are much more susceptible to the effects of stress – especially mental stress - than men. Even though you don't think you're stressed you could be suffering from what has been dubbed: Hurried Woman Syndrome.

Are you aged 25-55? Always trying to do too many things in a short space of time? Rushed off your feet from juggling the demands of work, family life, housework and caring for elderly relatives? It's a never-ending, on-going stress, and it can be affecting your body shape and your health. This kind of stress eats away at you; it is constantly there, day in, day out. You end up with chronically elevated cortisol levels as your body thinks you are constantly fighting for your life.

Are you stressed?

If you can see yourself in the list below, your cortisol levels are likely to be high:

- A tendency to gain fat around your tummy, chest, back and hips
- Increased appetite
- Increased cravings for chocolate, sweets, breads, cakes, caffeine and alcohol (particularly any combination of carbohydrates and fats, such as chocolate and cakes because they are particularly high in calories)
- Your immune system is low (you get frequent colds and infections)
- Headaches
- Nail biting
- Teeth grinding
- High cholesterol (if you don't know, get it checked)
- Blood sugar swings
- Digestive problems (such as bloating and flatulence)
- Chest pains - (you must see your doctor if you are getting chest pains but the effects of the stress hormones can mimic heart problems)
- Muscle aches and pains
- Shoulder and neck pain (stress hormones will keep certain muscles tense ready for fight or flight)
- Hair loss
- Irregular periods or no periods
- Difficulty in concentrating or forgetfulness
- Depression
- Increased premenstrual symptoms (PMS)
- Slower metabolism (which makes it harder to lose weight in general)
- Low sex drive
- Tiredness but an inability to sleep well
- Tendency to get a second wind in the evening
- Waking up in the middle of the night, finding it hard to get back to sleep and then desperately want to continue sleeping in the morning when you should be getting up

Your waist to hip ratio

For the purposes of measuring fat around the middle, BMI (body mass index) isn't the best test, nor is a measure of body fat percentage. The best test is the difference in size between your waist and your hips (your 'waist to hip ratio'). This is the true measure of fat around the middle and the best

indicator of whether or not you are going to be vulnerable to all the health risks associated with it.

Just get a tape measure and compare your waist measurement (at the narrowest point) with your hip measurement (at the widest point). Divide your waist figure by your hip figure to get what is known as your waist-hip ratio.

For example: 86cm (34in) waist divided by 94cm (37in) hip = 0.9

If your calculation gives a figure greater than 0.8 you are officially apple-shaped and you need to take action. For men the danger zone is above 0.95.

Apple or pear?

Pear shaped women appear to be driven more by the hormone oestrogen, which gives them a much more feminine, curvy, hourglass figure. Apple-shaped women have a more masculine shape driven more by testosterone. This shape difference isn't a problem in itself. It only becomes sinister when the apple-shaped woman gains weight.

The pear shape fat around the hips and thighs does not appear to operate in the same way and is relatively inactive and inert.

Menopausal?

If you are going into the menopause, your body will be extremely reluctant to let go of the fat around your middle. This is because fat is a manufacturing plant for oestrogen which will help protect your bones from osteoporosis. It's a very clever system, designed to protect you, but it helps explain why mere diet and exercise alone will rarely shift that stubborn fat. The combined effect of female hormonal changes, slower metabolism and stress with high cortisol levels create a bigger likelihood of fat around the middle.

Why tummy fat is bad for you

Not all fat in the body behaves the same. Fat around the middle of the body has a mind of its own. This "toxic fat" is far more metabolically active than fat elsewhere because it increases the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, cancer and diabetes. One of the biggest problems it causes

is insulin resistance.

Insulin resistance

When blood sugar increases (a result of the stress response or what you have eaten), your body releases insulin to help move the glucose out of your blood and into the cells to actually provide them with energy. But if you don't need that energy (you don't fight or flee) the default mechanism is to store the glucose as fat. If the stress continues, as it usually does, cortisol levels remain high, so the body triggers the breakdown of sugar stores in the liver and muscles to provide further fuel. Out comes more insulin to deal with the extra blood glucose.

Over time, the body simply can't respond to insulin the same way it used to. You could become intolerant to insulin – or insulin resistant.

If you are fat around the middle, you could be at greater risk of the following conditions:

Heart disease and strokes

Normally when you eat, insulin tells the liver not to release fats into the bloodstream. This is important because your body is trying to deal with fat from the meal and doesn't want to have to deal with extra fat released from the liver.

But when the liver is exposed to insulin for long periods of time (as a result of all your cortisol action), the liver ignores the insulin and releases fats (as triglycerides) into the bloodstream. These fats are wrapped up in VLDLs (very low density lipoproteins), which are normally rendered harmless by enzymes in the blood. But when you're busy eating these enzymes will be dealing with the fat from food. This means that the VLDLs are not challenged and are free to stick to the walls of the arteries as plaque (an artery-clogging process called atherosclerosis).

Under stress, the body raises the levels of a natural blood-clotting agent, fibrinogen, to help if you get injured. But in modern life, this just thickens your blood. So you're poor

arteries, already narrowed by fats, are going to be more susceptible to a spontaneous clot.

Diabetes

As your cells fail to respond to insulin, the body will always try pumping out more insulin to see if flooding the cells makes any difference. When you're under stress, flooding won't make any difference because the message has been sent out to the cells not to respond. This results in a situation where blood sugar levels are high but insulin levels are also high but can't do their job of regulating blood sugar. Over time, this can result in Type 2 diabetes.

High Blood Pressure

When you're stressed, high cortisol levels will rev you up for your fight or flight response so your body assumes it needs a higher blood pressure to run or fight. It does this by holding back sodium, stopping you from excreting it through urine. This salinates the blood and is the equivalent to overdosing on salt (sodium chloride) which we know is linked to high blood pressure. Cortisol also increases the strength of the heart contractions making your heart work harder as if it is under attack.

Cortisol pushes blood around the body diverting it from non-essential areas (digestive system) to places where it thinks it is most needed (such as arms and legs). It does this by dilating (expanding) the blood vessels in some parts of the body and constricting (narrowing) them in other parts. The result of this dilation and constriction is high blood pressure. If you have insulin resistance, there's a good chance you could develop high blood pressure over time.

Alzheimer's Disease

In the same way that that high cortisol and then high insulin levels increase the risk of heart disease, a similar problem happens to the blood vessels in the brain. The furring-up process, combined with continual constriction and dilation causes damage to these blood vessels too, increasing the risk of Alzheimer's and dementia.

Cancer

Stress affects the immune system, making it less efficient and therefore more susceptible to attack from cancer cells. High cortisol levels reduce the number of cells called Natural Killer Cells that normally work to help the immune system identify cancer cells as well as viruses. Cortisol also encourages new blood vessels to form in tumours (angiogenesis) that can stimulate their growth. Another trigger is the fact that cancer cells use glucose as their primary fuel and if your blood glucose levels are high because you have insulin resistance and the insulin can't do its job of moving the glucose out of the blood, there will inevitably be excess glucose on which the cancer cells can 'feed'.

So now that you know how bad it is to allow your body to continue storing fat around your middle, let me show you how you can reverse this dangerous precedent, slim down, and teach your body to behave in an altogether healthier way.

Eating healthily – NOT dieting!

There is a chance that your pattern of eating is subconsciously telling your body that it is under stress. If you restrict your diet or cut calories your body inevitably thinks there is a famine out there and that causes stress. It will slow down your metabolism to hold on to your precious fat stores. Furthermore, if your blood sugar levels fluctuate (as they do for most women), your body will be releasing adrenaline which is the same hormone it releases when you are under stress. Once more it encourages your body to store fat.

The solution is to find a way of eating that tells your body all is well – and reassure it that is not under stress.

If you are apple-shaped the most important thing for you to do is to sort out your imbalanced metabolism and NOT to go on a weight loss diet.

Never be hungry:

- Adrenaline and cortisol are released when you are under stress
- Adrenaline and cortisol are released when your blood sugar drops

The best way to get the message to your body that it is not under

stress so that it produces less adrenaline and also less cortisol (ultimately responsible for the fat around your middle) is to control your blood sugar levels.

Don't eat rubbish

As you eat or drink your blood sugar levels will go up and insulin will be released but if you're eating refined foods like sugar, white bread, cakes and biscuits or stimulant drinks like coffee, tea or cola, they'll hit your bloodstream quickly. More insulin will be released to deal with this sudden rise in blood sugar. Once dealt with, the blood sugar levels will drop, but because you've triggered so much insulin, they'll drop too low and you'll soon feel hungry again. The higher the blood sugar highs, the lower the lows will be afterwards.

At the drop your body will register a low blood sugar level and do two things. It will physically make you crave a cup of coffee or bar of chocolate to give you a quick fix to bring the blood sugar up again. It will also trigger the adrenal glands to produce more adrenaline and cortisol to help it release stores of sugar to correct the low level.

The 3-month eating plan

Aim to stick to the eating plan 80% of the time and allow yourself a 20% off for good behaviour (and human fallibilities!) and don't talk about 'good' and 'bad' foods (it induces guilt). Instead try to think of foods as junk (unhealthy) and healthy foods.

Try to stick to these simple rules:

1. Stop dieting (yes, really!):

And don't count calories either, otherwise your body will think there's a famine and raises stress levels (which contribute to fat storage)

2. Eat little and often:

Try to keep your blood sugar levels and energy levels stable by eating something every three hours. Just eat breakfast, lunch and dinner plus a snack mid morning and one mid afternoon, with no longer than three hours between. Oh, and try not to eat carbohydrates after 6pm.

This will stop those roller-coaster highs and cravings for sweet foods. Because your blood sugar isn't allowed to drop, your body will no longer have to ask you for a quick fix. As the blood sugar steadies, so will the mood swings. As your cortisol levels reduce you will automatically start to feel happier and calmer inside.

3. Don't skip breakfast:

If you miss breakfast completely your body immediately registers famine and hangs on tight to your ample stores of fat.

4. Eliminate all sugar and refined carbohydrates:

Avoid any foods that make your blood sugar rise quickly because as blood sugar drops again your body releases adrenaline and cortisol to stabilise it once more.

5. Add protein to each meal:

Protein slows down the rate the stomach processes food and slows the passage of the carbohydrates with it. As soon as you add a protein (be it animal or vegetable) to a carbohydrate you change it into a slower releasing carbohydrate, which is a good thing.

Protein helps in the control of insulin because it slows the rate of digestion. It also encourages the production of glucagon which works in the opposite way to insulin, increasing blood glucose by encouraging the body to burn fat for energy.

6. Eat essential fats:

A lifelong dependency on low fat diets might mean you're consuming less saturated fat, but most people today have unwittingly made themselves deficient in the good fats – essential fatty acids. As the name implies these essential fatty acids (EFAs) are essential and you can only get them from your diet. Your body cannot manufacture them so you have to eat them.

Essential fats are so important as they help you in a number of ways:

- They slow down the rate at which the stomach empties, so making carbohydrates even more slow-releasing
- They boost your metabolism
- They make you less insulin resistant
- They reduce inflammation

7. Don't eat on the run:

It gives your body the message that time is scarce, you are under pressure and stressed. Furthermore, your digestive system will be less efficient. Make a point of sitting down and eating your food as calmly as possible.

8. Watch what you drink:

Cut out all caffeine and sugary drinks and significantly reduce alcohol intake (cut it out completely for a month if you can).

9. Change the way you think about food:

If you're really serious about changing your body shape you need to think about food and eating as a way of life so that healthy, enjoyable eating becomes a habit, something you do everyday without even thinking about it, just like cleaning your teeth.

No more processed foods

Think of healthy and unhealthy foods as the difference between putting coals or paper on a fire. The paper will burn quickly with a big show of flames, but it doesn't give out much heat and burns so quickly it's not long before you have put more paper on the fire. On the other hand, coal takes longer to heat up but it will give you a steady lasting level of heat for a much longer time. It's quite a simple analogy. The aim is to eat the food equivalent of coal, not paper, no matter how attractive it may seem.

Refined and processed foods are like paper to the body's fire. Natural whole foods are like coal.

The more a food is refined (the greater proportion of natural

substances are removed) the faster will be the hit on your bloodstream. The more food you eat in its natural form, the steadier will be your blood sugar.

Why sugar is bad

Carbohydrates are starches and sugars and the easiest way to think about them is to split them into two groups – fast and slow releasing. Slow release carbohydrates tend to be plant foods such as grains, beans and vegetables.

The fast releasing ones will cause a rapid rise in blood sugar, followed by a drop and the subsequent release of stress hormones.

A food that has sugar added to it becomes fast releasing. Look out for sugar on food labels. A small pot of fruit yogurt, even a ‘healthy’ organic live fruit yogurt, can contain as much as eight teaspoons of sugar.

Be vigilant. Sugar is added to savoury foods like tinned vegetables, baked beans, tomato ketchup, soups and even pasta sauces where you might least expect it.

If you really want to get rid that weight around the middle you need to cut out all sugars completely - except for the odd bit at birthdays and special occasions.

Not all fruit and vegetables are equal

Fruit is a healthy food but it is also high in fructose (fruit sugar). So in order to get your blood sugar under control it is better to limit your fruit and vegetable intake to the slow releasing types in the table below for the first three months until you’ve got your fat distribution under control.

Slow releasing carbohydrates	Fast releasing carbohydrates
Grains (whole wheat, rye, oats, brown rice, barley, maize, quinoa, millet)	Refined grains – white flour, cakes, biscuits, white bread, pastries, instant porridge, white rice
Beans (lentils, kidney beans, soya, etc.)	White and brown sugar, glucose, honey, maple syrup
Vegetables – plus buckwheat which is not a grain but part of the rhubarb family	Potatoes and sweet potatoes

Fruits especially any berries, cherries, apples, pears and citrus	Bananas, dried fruit, grapes and fruit juice
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Cut back on wheat

Amylopectin, the most common form of starch, is faster releasing and does not have the same positive effect on insulin as beans and oats. Wheat is high in amylopectin. So although wholemeal bread is better for you than white bread, if you want to remove the weight more quickly it is better to avoid wheat most of the time and go for breads and pasta made with other grains such as rye and corn.

Wheat also contains a protein called gluten, which forms a sticky substance in the digestive system (like the flour and water glue they used to use in schools). Because gluten is sticky and difficult to digest it encourages the growth of unfriendly bacteria, which can produce toxic substances and gas.

Healthy carbs and non-healthy carbs

The bottom line is that your body needs carbohydrates. It is the most preferred source of fuel. Your brain runs on carbohydrates. That is why you can feel depressed, moody and not thinking straight, (brain fog) if you are not eating enough carbohydrates. So I would never recommend a low carbohydrate diet. It is just that Western society has got used to eating a lot of carbohydrates and unfortunately the wrong type of carbohydrate. Unhealthy carbohydrates will make you fat around the middle together with all the health consequences of that. Healthy carbs won't.

Artificial sweeteners are as bad as sugar

Any 'low sugar', 'diet' or 'low calorie' food or drink will usually contain a chemical sweetener, such as aspartame. It is a very common misconception that artificial sweeteners will help you lose and control your weight. But studies have shown that people who regularly use artificial sweeteners tend to gain weight through increased appetite.

Aspartame is 180 times sweeter than sugar and it can lead to binge eating and cravings, but it has also been linked to mood swings and depression because it alters the levels of the brain chemical serotonin.

I always advise people to avoid any foods or drinks that contain artificial sweeteners. But read the very small print on the labels as sweeteners can crop up in savoury as well as sweet foods, whether they're branded 'diet' or otherwise.

Healthy protein vs. not-so-healthy protein

It is essential that the protein you eat is good quality protein. I recommend fish (wild or organic not farmed if you can), organic eggs, beans, nuts and seeds. It is better to avoid red meat as it contains high levels of saturated fat and has been linked to both heart disease and bowel problems.

Another mission in your quest to reduce fat around your middle is to control the body's natural inflammatory process. Unfortunately the saturated fats in red meat produce substances called prostaglandins which are highly inflammatory.

Avoid milk, why?

Milk, cheese, cottage cheese, yoghurt, butter and ice cream are off the agenda. Here's why:

1. You might be lactose intolerant (much more common than you think). Symptoms include bloating and wind right through to severe diarrhoea and abdominal pain. Try removing milk products from your diet for a week and see if the symptoms disappear.
2. The protein part of the milk (casein) is a known allergen and is often implicated in skin problems like eczema. Most allergic reactions stimulate the release of histamine and other substances that produce inflammation. Cortisol is a strong anti-inflammatory so is called into play when there is an allergic reaction to a particular food.
3. A substance in milk (Insulin-like Growth Factor (IGF-1)) designed to give baby cows the best start in life, is thought to have a negative effect on human cells which could increase your risk of cancer. Even if the cancer warning isn't enough, as the name implies, IGF-1 has insulin-like properties in that it can stimulate the storage of glucose in fat cells.

Of all the dairy products, live plain organic yoghurt would be the best choice as it also contains beneficial bacteria that is helpful to the digestive system.

Vegetarians

It used to be thought that vegetarians needed to combine a number of foods together in one meal in order to get all the eight essential amino acids. Now it is known that as long as a mixture of different foods is eaten over a day the body can obtain the eight essential amino acids from that day's intake. So a mixture of legumes, nuts, seeds, quinoa and grains need to be eaten over the day.

Soya

I only ever recommend organic soya, because any other soya could be genetically modified. It is also best to eat it as traditionally eaten by other cultures, such as the Japanese, in the form of tofu, miso, soya sauce (tamari is wheat free) and tempeh. Avoid any soya products which are listed on the ingredients as being made from soya protein isolate.

The best way to tell a whole soya product from a soya isolate product is the 'organic' label. At the moment, if a food is labelled organic it is not genetically modified.

Omega 3 fats – are you getting enough?

If you're not consuming enough Omega 3 fats you might have any of the following symptoms:

- Difficulty losing weight
- Dry skin
- Cracked skin on heels or fingertips
- Hair falling out
- Lifeless hair
- Poor wound healing
- Dandruff
- Depression
- Irritability
- Soft or brittle nails
- Allergies
- Dry eyes
- Lack of motivation
- Aching joints
- Fatigue

- High blood pressure
- Arthritis
- Pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS)

When fat is added to a carbohydrate it works in the same way as adding protein, slowing down the rate at which food enters the intestines. So by adding fat (unsaturated of course) to a carbohydrate you improve its value to your diet. This can be as simple as adding nuts and seeds to porridge for breakfast (nuts and seeds are doubly helpful as they contain both protein and essential fats) or drizzling oil over roasted vegetables just before you serve them.

Contrary to what you think, essential fats really can help you to lose weight because they boost your metabolism. The Omega 3 EFAs (oily fish, soya, linseeds) specifically help with fat burning because they direct blood sugar toward the glycogen stores to be burned as fuel instead of being stored as fat.

Omega 3 fats also help budge fat around the middle by reversing insulin resistance.

What's so bad about caffeine?

Tea and coffee are not only fattening, they specifically cause fat to be deposited around your middle.

That's because caffeine is a stimulant that prompts your body to release cortisol which in turn triggers the release of insulin. Over time caffeine will make your body resistant to insulin so your body will turn glucose straight into fat and store it around your middle.

Drinking caffeinated beverages is just another way of telling your body it is under attack and must store fat. To convince your body it is okay to let go of this stored fat, you'll have to eliminate caffeine.

Try to avoid decaffeinated coffee as well because it still contains the stimulants theobromine and theophylline.

Cola is just as bad, if not worse, because it often combines caffeine and artificial sweeteners, and even chocolate contains a stimulant like caffeine (theobromine) so should come off your shopping list, for the time being.

Once off, aim to achieve four clear weeks with no caffeine at all. Your body has been getting the message 'store fat, store fat', for years and a powerful message has to be changed to 'let go of fat'.

No! Not booze too?

I'm afraid so. Try to stop for at least four weeks. The liquid carbohydrate hits the blood stream quickly, causing the release of cortisol and insulin and over time causing insulin resistance. So if you want to shift that weight around the middle you're going to need to eliminate alcohol for a few weeks.

If you can't resist, wine has less of an effect than beer because the carbohydrate content is less, and spirits have the least effect, but only ever drink on a full stomach or with a meal that contains some fats or oils to slow the absorption of alcohol.

Alcohol has other harmful effects:

- It depletes the body of vitamins and minerals which should be helping your body cope with stress
- It interferes with the metabolism of essential fatty acids
- It acts as a diuretic making you dehydrated, which the body registers as a stress.
- It stresses the liver

Fruit juices

Avoid them completely for at least the first four weeks and then re-introduce diluted half water, half juice. Never drink fruit juice on it's own but have it with a snack so again the food will slow down the absorption of the sugars.

Water

Drink six glasses a day. Try hot water and a slice of lemon before breakfast: it's wonderfully refreshing and excellent for the liver. Herbal teas do count towards your liquid intake but caffeinated drinks don't.

How to eat out

- Italian: avoid pasta and pizza - choose fish, vegetables, salad, avocados, mozzarella instead
- Indian: avoid rice and naan bread – choose prawn, vegetable and bean (like chickpea) dishes
- Chinese: avoid rice and noodles – choose fish, egg and vegetable dishes
- Thai: avoid rice and noodles – choose fish dishes, vegetables – look for tofu curries

Always ask to have the carbohydrate part of your meal replaced with extra vegetables or salad, and always avoid the bread basket at the beginning of the meal. If you're eating late in the evening, make sure you've had an additional snack when dinner would have been so your low blood sugar levels don't draw you to inappropriate choices.

When you are at somebody else's house ask for more vegetables and salad to have with the protein part of the meal and either avoid or just have a small amount of potatoes or rice.

Supplements

Because your body has been pumping out high levels of adrenaline and cortisol for long periods of time, it will have had to call on supplies of vitamins and minerals to deal with this. When you are continually stressed, the body becomes increasingly nutritionally deficient. The main vitamins and minerals affected are the B vitamins, vitamin C, magnesium and zinc. So it's important you take these in supplement form for three months to correct any basic deficiencies.

A number of chemical reactions are involved in turning glucose into energy (the good reaction) instead of fat (the bad reaction). These are controlled by enzymes, which are themselves dependant on certain vitamins and minerals in the body. If you're low on these nutrients, your body will find it harder to let go of that weight.

If you, like so many women, have been yo-yo dieting for many years, either restricting food intake or trying different diet drinks or pills, you are very likely to be deficient in a number of vitamins and minerals.

I will explain the value of specific nutrients and their role in your transformation and outline a detailed three month programme of supplements and herbs to support the changes you are making to your diet and lifestyle. It may seem like a long list, but many of the vitamins and minerals are combined in one supplement, so you won't have masses of pills to take each day. Supplementation is very important, however, because by supporting what you are eating, your body will get the message that is OK to let go of that apple-shape and get you back into good health as quickly as possible.

There is a strong and frequently repeated argument that we should be able to get all the nutrients we need from 'a well balanced diet. Yes, we should. The problem is, all too often, we can't. Food rich in nutrients needs to be grown in soil rich in nutrients, but much of our soil has been over-farmed to the point that it no longer contains the nutrients we need. Pesticides and other chemicals reduce the nutrient content of the food, and as food is processed it is stripped of its key nutrients even more. The additional chemicals in our processed food put an additional strain on our bodies, increasing our need for *more* key nutrients.

Nowadays it is not easy to get everything you need from your diet. With the dominance of supermarket shopping, there's no way of knowing the freshness or nutritional content of our food. Over-farming and the use of pesticides mean much of the soil our food is grown in has become depleted in

vital nutrients. Many fruits and vegetables at the supermarket have travelled hundreds of miles over many days to get to the shelves, with meagre nutrients becoming ever more depleted the longer they are from being picked.

Our modern fruit and vegetables contain an average of 20% fewer minerals (magnesium 24%, calcium 46%, iron 27% and zinc 59%) than they did in the 1930s. Iron levels in modern meat are down by 47%, in milk by over 60%, and calcium levels in cheese are down by 15% and Parmesan cheese by 70% (*The Independent Food Commission's Food Magazine 2005*).

And when you are going to these lengths to really try to turn your health around, it absolutely makes sense to boost your intake of certain nutrients and add in a few specific herbs to make your body's job a little easier if you can.

What can supplements do?:

- Make your body less insulin resistant, or in other words more insulin *sensitive* so it is able to use the insulin you produce in a most effective way
- Help your body remove glucose from the blood
- Calm your adrenal glands so they produce the correct level of hormones
- Help your body to burn off excess fat
- Improve liver function

Which ones to chose?

Walk into any chemist, supermarket or health food store and you'll be faced with a huge selection of supplements. It can be utterly baffling to know which brand to choose. My view, when it comes to buying supplements, is you get what you pay for. I always advise clients to buy the most expensive they can afford. You need to get good quality supplements for maximum absorption. I would recommend you buy capsules (preferably vegetable ones instead of gelatine) rather than tablets. Capsules tend to be filled only with the essential nutrients. Tablets can include a variety of fillers, binders and bulking agents. Mineral supplements like calcium should be in the form of citrates or ascorbates which are more easily absorbed by the body. Chlorides, sulphates, carbonates and oxides should be avoided as they are not so easily assimilated and mineral supplements in this form may pass through the body without being absorbed.

Mighty Minerals

Chromium: needed for the metabolism of sugar. It helps insulin take glucose into the cells. Without chromium, insulin is less effective at controlling blood sugar levels and glucose levels rise. It helps to control cravings and reduces hunger. Chromium has also been shown to reduce levels of the stress hormone, cortisol.

(If you are diabetic and on medication, then you need to speak to your doctor before taking a chromium supplement)

Magnesium: known as 'nature's tranquilliser', magnesium calms the adrenal glands and helps balance blood sugar by contributing to the production and action of insulin. It tends to be depleted when you're under stress.

Zinc: needed for the production of stress hormones, insulin and sex hormones, and is crucial for maintaining healthy liver and immune function. If you are deficient in zinc, insulin won't be able to do its job properly and glucose can't enter the cells. Because insulin levels then remain high in the blood, more insulin will be produced, leading to insulin resistance over time.

Vital Vitamins

Vitamin C: helps burn off that fat around the middle, is crucial for adrenal gland function, and it helps reduce cholesterol and lower blood pressure.

B vitamins: known as the 'stress' vitamins. It is important to take them when you are working on nourishing and calming the adrenal function. They also have an effect on blood sugar balance because they are needed for glucose metabolism. All the B vitamins (B1, B3, B6, B12 and folic acid) are needed for the release of energy from food so I'd suggest taking a supplement containing all the B vitamins.

Vitamin E: crucial for people with insulin resistance because it improves the communication between insulin receptors and glucose as it makes the cell membranes more fluid.

Other Beneficial Nutrients

There are some other extremely beneficial nutrients in this 'lose your belly' plan which can be taken in supplement form, but they are not classed as a vitamin and minerals so these are outlined below.

Omega 3 Fatty Acids: take as fish oil or linseed oil capsules

Co-enzyme Q10: helps shift fat around the middle because it releases energy by burning that fat. It also has a role in controlling blood sugar levels

Alpha Lipoic acid: its role is to release energy by burning glucose. The more glucose is burned, the less insulin your body has to release and so your body stores less fat.

Warning

If you are diabetic and on medication, talk to your doctor before supplementing with alpha-lipoic acid. Because it can lower blood glucose levels, you'd need to be monitored and your medication possibly altered accordingly.

Green tea extract: contains catechins which have been shown to help burn off fat.

Siberian Ginseng: this herb helps with adrenal function and calming the body.

Amino Acids

Amino acids are the building blocks of the protein that you eat in your diet. Certain amino acids are vital to this programme because they can help to make cells more sensitive to insulin while others are important to help cushion the body against the effect of the stress hormones.

The most important amino acids for this 'lose your belly' programme are:

- **N-Acetyl cysteine:** has been found to help reduce insulin levels and make the body more sensitive to insulin

Warning

If you are diabetic and on medication, you should speak to your doctor before supplementing with n-acetyl cysteine.

- **Carnitine:** is involved in energy production and it helps by breaking down fat to release energy
- **Tyrosine:** suppresses appetite and helps to burn off fat
- **Arginine:** is involved in promoting the release of blood sugar hormones including glucagon (the fat burning hormone)

Warning

Arginine should not be used if you are susceptible to herpes as it can trigger the virus.

- **Glutamine:** can help with sugar cravings as it can be converted to sugar for energy and so takes away the need to eat something sweet.
- **Branched Chain Amino Acids (BCAAs):** BCAAs include three amino acids: leucine, isoleucine and valine. They help with muscle growth and repair and also help counteract high levels of cortisol released when we are under stress.

Your Supplement Programme

The aim is to control high levels of stress hormones by getting your blood sugar in balance and looking at the stress in your life. At the same time the supplements will enable your body to do this more efficiently and within the short space of time of three months.

Daily supplement programme:

Nutrients	Amounts
Chromium	200mcg
Zinc	15mg
Vitamin E	300ius
Manganese	5mg
Magnesium citrate	300mg
Vitamin B1	25mg
Vitamin B2	25mg
Vitamin B3	25mg
Vitamin B12	25mg
Biotin	35mg
Folic acid	200mcg
Vitamin B5	50mg
Vitamin B6 (as pyridoxal-5-phosphate)	25mg
Siberian ginseng	100mg
Vitamin C	100mg
Co-enzyme Q10	25mg
Alpha-lipoic acid	100mg
Green tea extract	50mg

Amino Acids	Amounts
N-acetyl cysteine	500mg
L-carnitine	200mg
L-tyrosine	200mg
L-arginine	200mg
L-glutamine	200mg
Isoleucine	100mg
Leucine	100mg
Valine	100mg

I know how confusing it can get when seeing a long list of supplements you need to take. Especially now you know how important getting the right quality and form is to the effectiveness of the supplements. It can be quite daunting trying to make sure you are getting the right ones. So to help make it easier for you I have asked The Natural Health Practice to help formulate two special supplements. The first one Nutri Support contains all the vitamins, minerals and other nutrients mentioned above, in the right amounts, and the second supplement Amino Support contains all the amino acids mentioned above, in the correct amounts.

You can get them from www.naturalhealthpractice.com

Along with the two supplements, the Nutri Support and the Amino Support, you should add in:

Vitamin C Support	1 twice a day
Omega 3 Support	1 twice a day

Exercise

Exercise or physical activity has never been more important. If you have fat around the middle of your body caused, in part, by the activity of your stress hormones, exercise **MUST** become one of your priorities. By simply making time for exercise in your life, you can control the potentially damaging fight or flight response. It's not hard, but it is important. And by following the specific exercise recommendations in this e-book you will gain a number of significant benefits:

- Burning off fat around the middle
- Reducing the negative effects of both cortisol and insulin
- Increasing your muscle mass (which in turn burns calories)
- Burning calories and using body fat (everywhere in the body) as fuel
- Preventing and even reversing insulin resistance
- Reducing blood sugar and insulin (because exercise helps make insulin more effective and so lowers blood sugar)
- Improving insulin sensitivity in skeletal muscles and fat
- Improving body shape

The only way to ensure the fat around your middle is the **FIRST** to disappear is by following the combined recommendations in this book and changing your diet, lifestyle and adding in exercise.

Don't weigh yourself

After just a couple of weeks on my plan you will start to notice a change in body shape rather than necessarily a loss in weight. And remember that you want to lose **FAT**, not just weight. Diets that promise rapid **WEIGHT** loss do so by encouraging your body to shed fat, muscle and water. Water is just a temporary loss and you do not want to lose muscle. If your focus is losing the fat around your middle, don't expect dramatically rapid results. You cannot lose more than a pound or two of fat a week so these changes may seem subtle at first.

Women who've followed my plan notice the first change is that they start to feel much flatter under the bust. After this, your clothes will start to feel looser around the waist. These are all signs that the recommendations are working. When you exercise properly you will gain muscle, and muscle weighs more than fat. However, a pound of fat takes up about five times as much space as a pound of muscle so as your fat levels go down and your

muscle mass goes up you will start to look smaller. You may even drop a dress size whilst still staying the same weight.

Ignore the scales. This can – and often does - happen without you actually losing *weight*.

Build muscle

Muscle is metabolically active. This means it requires fuel in the form of calories just to maintain it even when you are sitting doing nothing. So the more muscle you have, the more calories you consume, and, if you don't overeat, the more fat you will burn.

For instance:

- 500g (1lb) of muscle burns 75 calories a day
- 500g (1lb) of fat burns 8 calories a day

This is one of the infuriating reasons why men tend to find it easier to lose weight than women - they generally have more muscle than women.

Weight gain with age

It is sad, but true that we all tend to gain weight as we get older. One of the main reasons is that we lose muscle. After the age of 40, women can start to lose about 230g (½lb) of muscle a year. Inactive women over the age of 40 lose muscle mass twice as fast as inactive men. So over ten years between 40 and 50, most of us will have lost 5lbs of muscle. As muscle mass decreases, our metabolism become increasingly sluggish. Let's face it; we all also tend to get less active as we get older so this inactivity will only add to the problem. With less muscle and less activity weight is likely to pile on as fat.

What kind of exercise is best?

In order to lose that fat around the middle, you need to do a combination of cardiovascular (getting you puffed) and resistance training (with weights or bands to build muscles). The aim is to use exercise to help burn off fat AND to build muscle which helps you burn off even more fat faster.

Keep on your toes

Your body is very clever. In the same way it adapts to any restriction in food by slowing the metabolism it also adapts to exercise. So after about four weeks of doing one sort of activity it becomes more efficient and uses less energy to perform the same exercise. To achieve the same fat-burning impact you have to continually change the exercise (walking to running, then cycling, then rowing etc) and increasing the intensity to trick your body out of its normal patterns. Alternatively, try interval training (walk a certain distance, then jog to the next lamppost, walk again to catch your breath, then run fast for 50 metres etc.).

It's bad NOT to exercise

The benefits of exercise for you are enormous. You will gain the body shape you want and lose that fat around your middle because the exercise is helping you in a number of ways. After as little as 10 minutes of strenuous exercise the brain produces endorphins (the feel good neurotransmitters) that calm you down and decrease stress hormones. Research has shown that just brisk walking four times weekly reduces body fat, lowers insulin resistance and reduces food consumption.

Tips for the exercise-phobic

The aim is to get exercise back into your life, not to turn you into a fitness freak. If the idea of activity appalls you, think about it in terms of upping a few of the small activities you do every day.

- If you have not exercised for a while start off very gently with just 5 to 10 minutes and build it up gradually
- Always warm up for at least five minutes before exercising
- Always cool down after exercise with stretching movements
- Choose an exercise routine that fits in with your life. Dancing to music at home is fine (buy some new CDs, or a dance video).
- Why not get a re-bouncer (mini trampoline) or get on the kids trampoline – it's harder work than you think!
- Ask neighbours: Does anyone have an exercise bike/treadmill/rowing machine in their garage? These things are the biggest white elephants (often being used as a clothes horse) and many people would be only

too happy to think their expensive machinery is being used.

- If you're going to exercise in the evening try to do it straight after work. There's nothing like coming home to a warm house and a beckoning TV to dampen your cast-iron willpower.
- Think about being generally more active. Walk up the stairs, instead of taking the lift or standing on the escalators. Park further away from where you are going or walk another stop further on before you get on the bus.
- Join a ramblers club so that the walking becomes a social activity
- Plan family walks/bike rides into your weekend.
- Borrow someone's dog on a regular basis. There's nothing like the pitiful look in their eye to ensure you get out for a brisk walk/jog and they are so grateful afterwards.
- Check out classes at your local swimming pool. Adult fitness is a big thing right now so there's bound to be some form of activity to interest you.
- Cancel the newspaper delivery and either walk or cycle to the shop every morning.
- When you pick the kids up for school take a football and suggest a kick about in the park – then join in! Don't sit on the side. Really join in and keep it all going for 30 minutes. They'll be happy (if not a little amazed) and you can tick another aerobic session off your weekly list.
- Every time you plan a trip in the car stop and think. If you left a little earlier couldn't you walk there? Or cycle? Exercise is always so much more satisfying if you're killing two birds with one stone.
- Take a proper lunch break at work, take a walk for half an hour and then come back and eat your lunch calmly.

Quick fixes don't work

If you've spent many years with excess fat around your middle the chances are you will have been tempted by the many stomach-trimming gadgets on the market. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could ignore all my advice, wrap a piece of rubber around your tummy and switch it on and achieve the same effect? Sadly these things can't have the same impact. The only way to lose fat is to change the messages your body is giving itself. The problem can only be solved from the inside out.

Stomach crunches cannot do the job alone either. It is important to keep your abdominals strong with core stability exercises and crunches, but don't expect localised exercise to solve the problem. Your stomach muscles are completely covered in a thick layer of fat, and any six-pack you may be

working on simply won't show until the fat is gone.

Stress

Beat your stress

There are two ways of tackling the stress in your life. Either bite the bullet and make a few really big changes so you no longer have to juggle so many plates (put the aged relatives in a nursing home, cut your working hours, go to bed earlier and get up earlier in the morning so you're not so rushed) or learn a few coping strategies to help you change the way you handle stress, and lessen its physical impact.

If you take control of your time, you'll be much better at avoiding falling into yet another stress trap, running late, missing appointments, eating on the run and never quite making time for yourself.

How to reduce stress:

1. Prioritise
2. Delegate
3. Put yourself first
4. Learn some relaxation techniques
5. Put things in perspective
6. Take time to eat
7. Take time to go to the toilet (yes! Really)
8. Take regular exercise
9. Spend time with your friends
10. Have a cuddle
11. Laugh
12. Get enough sleep

A clever relaxation technique

This is a wonderful relaxation technique that does not cost anything and that you do have to go somewhere to do it. But you must allow the time to do it. Find a quiet space at home, shut the door, switch off the phone and take a few deep breaths:

1. Tense each part of the body as you breathe in. Then hold your breath for five seconds while you keep the muscles tense. Relax and breathe out again slowly over a count of about 10 seconds.
2. Curl your toes up and press down with your feet. Relax.
3. Press your heels down, pulling your toes up. Relax.

4. Tense your calf muscles. Relax.
5. Straighten your legs and tense your thigh muscles. Relax.
6. Tighten your buttocks. Relax.
7. Tighten your stomach muscles. Relax.
8. Bend your elbows up and flex your biceps. Relax.
9. Hunch your shoulders and tense your neck muscles. Relax.
10. Clench your teeth, frown and screw up your eyes as tight as you can. Relax.
11. Tense all your muscles at the same time. After ten seconds, relax.
12. Now close your eyes. Concentrate your mind on an imaginary diamond glinting on a black velvet background for 30 seconds as you continue to breathe slowly and deeply.
13. Now focus on another peaceful object of your choice for 30 seconds
14. Now open your eyes

Sleep more and lose weight

It is also possible to lose weight by spending just one extra hour a night in bed! One of the chemicals released during sleep is leptin, this suppresses the production of fat cells by curbing appetite. Leptin helps to control feelings of fullness. When sleep is restricted leptin levels are reduced. The longer you stay up the more likely you are to eat and the low levels of leptin increase the urge to eat. Studies have shown that if you sleep less than eight hours a night then you will end up with a higher level of body fat and a higher BMI.

Is it all in your genes?

In times gone by, the people with the slowest metabolisms were most likely to survive times without food because their body worked efficiently to save everything possible as fat, only burning what was absolutely necessary for energy. Their 'efficient' metabolism kept them alive. In our modern society, a person with that kind of genetic make up isn't regarded as quite so fortunate. These are the people who need to watch what they eat or else they will put on weight.

It is thought that some of us can have a genetic predisposition to store fat around the middle and become apple-shaped. These genetic factors could on average give someone a lower metabolic rate, a tendency to have higher insulin levels and a greater likelihood of being insulin-resistant. But just because you have a genetic disposition it is not inevitable that you are 'stuck' with that weight around the middle. You may just have to work a bit harder than say a friend of yours who can eat anything and stay slim. But I guess

you know that from bitter experience already.

Tests

There are a number of tests which I think are very useful in the diagnosis and treatment of fat around the middle. It might be useful to know whether your tummy fat is only a cosmetic problem or whether changes have started to take place within your body that mean you should take the recommendations in this book more seriously and make the changes wholeheartedly for the sake of your future health.

Adrenal Stress Test

Scientists have looked at the association between fat around the middle and cortisol levels measured in saliva. They have found that high levels of cortisol measured in the first morning sample taken after waking was significantly correlated with fat around the middle of the body. For this test, four saliva samples are collected in a kit at home over the course of one day and the samples are then sent back to the lab for analysis. The test also measures your DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone) which is the hormone that works to balance many of the negative effects of cortisol and helps you cope with stress. Research has shown that DHEA helps to improve memory function, boost energy levels, and has an anti-weight effect by decreasing fat tissue, excess insulin and food intake. Most importantly, DHEA appears to protect the immune system from some of the cell damage caused by ageing and disease.

Insulin Resistance Test

This is a fasting blood test which measures your insulin level and it also measures cholesterol, HDL ('good' cholesterol) LDL('bad' cholesterol), high sensitivity C-reactive protein (a marker of inflammation) and glycosolated haemoglobin (HbA1c) which measures your average blood glucose level over two

Food Allergy/Intolerance Test

Cortisol is a strong anti-inflammatory which is quite naturally called into play when you have an allergic reaction to a particular food. So by eating foods that your body finds difficult to deal with, you are actually causing a rise in cortisol and increasing the message to store fat. This is why so many people report a dramatic loss of weight when they eliminate foods they are

sensitive too. If you have any of the following symptoms as well as fat around your middle then it worth considering a Food Allergy/Intolerance Test so you know what foods and drinks don't suit you:

- Bloating
- excess wind (flatulence)
- diarrhoea
- constipation
- chronic infections
- skin problems like itching, rashes, eczema etc.
- fatigue
- joint and muscle pains (because of the inflammatory response),
- arthritis
- headaches/migraines
- rhinitis (constant runny nose)
- sinus problems.

The test measures your reactions to 120 different foods (including fish, meat, poultry, egg, dairy, vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds and grains), seasonings, colourings, additives and drinks from one single blood sample which can be taken by your practice nurse or doctor. It also gives you a measure of your IgE which is an indication of an acute allergic response

Candida Antibody Test

This test will show you whether you have a yeast (candida) overgrowth. You can have yeast overgrowth in the vagina, which is more commonly known as thrush, but it is also possible to have yeast overgrowth in other parts of the body. Candida can also form in the intestines and mouth.

In the intestines, the yeast form of candida can become 'mycelial', in that it forms root-like growths that can penetrate the intestine walls, and cause the gut to 'leak'. Small pieces of undigested food then escape into the bloodstream. This condition is known as 'leaky gut syndrome', and it is the result of an overwhelming infestation of candida in the body, known as 'candidiasis'.

Persistent vaginal thrush can be one of the symptoms of candidiasis, but other symptoms can include food cravings, especially for sugar and bread, fatigue, a bloated stomach with excess flatulence, a 'spaced out' feeling, recurrent cystitis, headaches and becoming tipsy on a very small amount of alcohol. Both men and women can suffer from candidiasis.

Candidiasis can be caused by the use of antibiotics because they kill off healthy bacteria in the gut, allowing candida to overgrow. Other causes are the use of steroids for asthma and arthritis, for example, and also the Pill and HRT. People with a poor immune system such as those suffering from chronic fatigue can also be susceptible to a candida overgrowth as well as those with diabetes.

If you have a yeast overgrowth, it will cause an immune response and the body will produce higher levels of specific antibodies to candida. These antibodies can be detected in a saliva sample, which can be organised by post. This sensitive test can not only detect a recent or current candida infection but also previous infections.

If you would like more information on these tests or to order any of them see The Next Step section.

Keep it up!

Changing the way you eat, adding supplements and an exercise regime AND trying to cut back on the stress in your life isn't going to seem easy for the first few weeks. The four-point-plan is going to represent quite a significant life change for many of you. But please do persevere. There will be days when you can't resist that bar of chocolate or that glass of wine, when you feel the stress overwhelming you, and when it's pouring with rain and the idea of a walk is about as appealing as an enema. But stick with it. After just a few days without sugar and stimulants you will – I promise – start to feel so much healthier than you have for a long time. A gentle jog on a sunny day can do more for your self-esteem and mood than any full milk, full caffeine latte can. And in less than a month you will start to notice a few changes. The fat at the top of your belly often goes first, then lower down, then across your back. And before you know it, your clothes will start to feel loose. Friends will comment on how good you're looking, and you'll be spurred on to keep going.

This is, after all, only a three month programme. It's not a life sentence as dieting might be (or might already have been). I'm willing to bet that once you reach your goal, once you've got your old figure and old spirit back, you'll want to keep up with a few of the changes. Scientists say it takes 10 days to break a habit. So after three months some of these changes will be so much a part of your life you'll want to stay with them forever.

When you've reached your goal

When you've regained your waist and your body is behaving more healthily CONGRATULATIONS! You've done so well. But don't forget, this hasn't been a "diet". When you reach your goal you shouldn't just go back to your old unhealthy ways of living and eating, otherwise your body will revert back to its old fat storing ways too.

My advice would be resist any urge to go back to sugar and refined carbohydrates. Stick, if you can, to the 80% rule and only indulge 20% of the time. They really are no good for us. The occasional birthday cake or dessert at a special event is fine but don't let them slip back into your old every day diet. You'd be safe enough re-introducing starchy carbohydrates with your evening meal now, so include brown rice, potatoes or pasta if you like. Just make sure you still have a protein (animal or vegetable) with that meal to provide a good balance.

The two foods which I would suggest you avoid most of the time (80%)

are sugar (in any form) and refined carbohydrates. They are not good for you or any us generally.

The odd cup of coffee or black tea is fine now, but judge how you feel when you drink it. If the coffee makes you feel as if you are climbing the walls then it's clear your body can't cope and you'd be better off with tea. You may prefer to stick to herb teas. Try introducing green tea if you like, as although it contains caffeine, it can bring good levels of antioxidants into your diet.

Try to continue this pattern of eating little and often with healthy snacks between meals.

Exercise: Try to go the gym once a week to keep those muscles toned, and you know exercise is good for you, so don't stop. As a minimum aid to get yourself a little out of breath for around 30 minutes five days a week.

Supplements: You can reduce your supplement programme to a level that will help maintain your weight, shape and health:

- A good multivitamin and mineral every day
- Vitamin C Support
- Omega 3 Support

But be prepared to add a vitamin B complex and Siberian ginseng to boost your protection against stress hormones if you find yourself in a period of stress.

What if the fat starts to creep back?

First of all, don't despair, We all have our ups and downs. It's life. Just start again on the three month four prong approach (eating, supplements, exercise and lifestyle). In my experience, because you and your body now know what they're doing, the fat will actually come off quicker than before. Your body will get an 'Ah, ha!' moment and think 'I've been here before'. The switch will take place much faster.

Your Next Steps

If you would like to find out more information about this health topic, would like to order any of the supplements or tests mentioned above or if you would like to arrange a personal clinic or telephone consultation then please telephone or click one of the links below:

Supplements and Tests - Where to get the best:

[The Natural Health Practice \(NHP\)](#)

0845 8800915. International: ++ 44 1 892 507598

help@naturalhealthpractice.com

www.naturalhealthpractice.com

Supplements

For individual supplements and supplement programmes especially formulated to help maintain your health at this time please [Click Here](#):

Health Tests – by post

For more information or to order any of the health tests mentioned in this email please [Click Here](#).

The Natural Health Practice (NHP) is my supplier of choice for all the supplements and tests mentioned in this eBook (and much more). NHP only carry products, tests and supplements that I recommend in my clinics using premium quality ingredients that are in the highest safe dosage levels and in their correct and most effective form.

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Other E-books in this Series

- Natural Solutions to Amenorrhoea (No Periods)
- Natural Solutions to Breast Problems
- Natural Solutions to Cervical Abnormalities and Smear Tests
- Natural Solutions to Cystitis
- Natural Solutions to Endometriosis
- Natural Solutions to Fertility and Infertility
- Natural Solutions to Fibroids
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- Natural Solutions to Heavy Periods
- Natural Solutions to Hysterectomy
- Natural Solutions to Irregular Periods
- Understanding The Menopause
- Natural Solutions to Miscarriage
- Natural Solutions to Osteoporosis
- Natural Solutions to Ovarian Cysts
- Natural Solutions to Painful Periods
- Understanding Polycystic Ovaries (PCOS)
- Natural Solutions to Pre-Menstrual Syndrome (PMS)
- Natural Solutions to Prolapse
- Natural Solutions to Thrush
- Natural Solutions to Vaginal Infections
- Natural Solutions to Weight Control
- Fat Around the Middle
- The 7 most common mistakes people make about their health and what you can do to avoid them
- The Foundation of Health
- Using Natural Medicine

For more information on the e-books listed above please [click here](#).