

## Re: Regulation of Fatty Acid Metabolism

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Dunne E. Dawe wrote:

> *On 10 Nov 2004 07:11:29 -0800, tunderbar@hotmail.com (tcomeau) posted:*

>

>>

>> *One does not have to be "on a diet" or "on a low carb diet" to*

>> *restrict carbs.*

>

> *That is nonsense. Restricting any dietary input is regarded as a*

> *"diet". Meaning something different from the usual fare.*

Sorry, but "on a diet" means restricting dietary input based on a specific plan, while a person's "diet" is what one consumes. All people have "a diet" but not all people are "on a diet." If a person's diet is low in carbs either because of sheer preference or regional norms, or because of what restaurants serve in that part of the world or what mom cooks, the person is not "on a diet." In other words, that can be the usual fare, so one need not be "on a diet" to restrict carbs.

>

> *When are you going to realise that it is calories that matter? There*

> *is NO way that you can eat more calories than you expend and lose*

> *weight. You are either fooling yourself, or someone is.*

That's true. But how to accomplish that is the question. Whether a person admits to cutting calories consumed below calories expended is not the issue. In theory, anybody could cut down by a pat or two of butter a day or a few spoons of sugar a day and lose up to 10 lbs a year. In practice, it will not work. People cannot regulate caloric intake that carefully, and metabolism and caloric expenditure are dynamic. If a person reduces consumption of refined grains, starches and saturated fats, but does not count calories, carbs or grams of fat per se, and the results are positive, I don't really see what difference it makes if the person understands the underlying issues of caloric intake vs. expenditure or not.

>

>> *That is my point. The*

>> *argument is based on the fact that the mainstream has insisted that*

- >> *the only way to maintain weight is to restrict fat and eat more*
- >> *carbs,*
- >
- > *Since when? I've only seen the advice to reduce calories. Of course,*
- > *if you substitute 500 gm of fat for 500 g of carb, you will be losing*
- > *2500 calories of energy by this simple move (equivalent to a loss of*
- > *280 g of fat)*

You might want to look at the food pyramid then. It's taught in just about every school in the US, and is printed on food wrappers and bread packages regularly. It's taught by the Cub Scouts and the Girl Scouts when they learn about nutrition. It shows fats, oils and sweets at the top, with the "use sparingly" caption. It shows bread, rice, cereal and pasta at the bottom, and recommends 6–11 servings a day. That's the American diet. That's what has been taught in schools for decades.

Since the food pyramid has come out, obesity has become epidemic. Yes, I know there are other factors, such as "supersize me" and "mega big gulp," but the advice is clearly consistent with the "more carbs, less fat" claim.

- >> *If you omit or restrict refined and high-GI carb foods, it becomes*
- >> *difficult to eat a lot of carbs.*
- >
- > *Yet several BILLION Asians manage to eat 70% of their diet as carb and*
- > *enjoy perfect health? Where is this difficulty?*

The traditional Asian diet had much more brown rice and less white rice. That's changing. There weren't many fat Vietnamese nationals a few decades ago, and there are now.

- >
- >> *If you do not restrict refined and*
- >> *high-GI carbs it is difficult to not eat too many carbs.*
- >
- > *Total nonsense. Just look at the food tables and see for instance, how*
- > *easily fatty foods will take you way over 2000 calories per day.*
- > *The only way to eat too much of anything is to choose to eat too much*
- > *of anything. Everything must be restricted to no more than needed*
- > *calories, in order to maintain weight.*

Your first point is valid. It's not difficult to eat too many carbs if the diet is restricted as such. However, the only way to eat too much of anything is not just by choosing to eat too much of anything. It's also by having uncontrollable cravings for more of them. A diet high in high-GI simple carbs will produce rapidly elevated glucose levels followed by a rapid influx of insulin. Once the sugar is absorbed, it will be followed by strong cravings to eat more since the insulin level will remain elevated. That's especially true of a diet that is not otherwise balanced. Moderate fat intake and lower carb intake will slow down the absorption of sugar. It's not necessarily choice. A person with a bad diet will not necessarily choose to eat more, but will have too much trouble resisting. If nothing

about the diet changes, but the person attempts to cut calories alone with an across the board cut in food intake, or a cut in everything but refined carbs, the person will end up hungry and not able to follow the caloric restrictions in the long run. We know that people try this. We also know the percentage of dieters who fail with this approach, and it's very high.

>>>

>>> *No, it's primarily refined carbs*

>>> *When I know that a pathological condition is caused by trans fats I*

>>> *say "the cause is trans fats" and not "the cause is fats"*

>>> *So, if you don't want to be like the "fats-bashers" people you hate*

>>> *you should say "the cause is refined carbs" and not "the cause is*

>>> *carbs" or you're in the same position of those who demonize fats*

>>> *without realizing the importance of EFA*

>>>

>>

>> *Again, my reference to carbs in general is in the context that the*

>> *mainstream insists that carbs have little or no role to play in*

>> *obesity.*

>

> *Calories do. The sooner you realise this the sooner you can stop being*

> *so confused.*

And so do refined carbs. Refined sugar is a contributing factor in obesity. While you can't cut down on it without reducing calories, (unless you substitute other calories in equal measure which would not help) it's also hard to argue that you can do it without cutting down on refined carbs, because substituting an equal value of refined carbs would not help either, and sticking to huge amounts of refined sugar and trying to cut down on fat alone will not be viable. So you would need to cut down on refined carbs in many diets to improve them. That's of course far from saying that calories have no role, but saying that carbs have little or no role in obesity is a questionable statement. I'd feel more comfortable listing refined foods (which happen to be carbs) as a factor instead of just saying "carbs" but saying that carbs have no role implies that refined foods have no role.

>

>> *They insist that it is calories and they then use the logic*

>> *that fat is twice the calories as carbs therefore restricting fat is*

>> *the way to go.*

>

> *Fat reduction is an easy way to help in reducing many calories.*

> *Whatever you eat, you MUST reduce calorie intake below calorie*

> *expenditure to lose weight.*

You must also sustain it, which is the big problem for most people.

>

>> *It is the carbs, albeit refined and high-GI carbs.*

>

> *What is? You have no evidence of this world-changing claim. Why do you*

> *keep banging your head against this wall?*

There is evidence that people who go on diets such as Atkins that restrict carbs do lose weight for 6–9 months, at which point most of them are off the diet. That's not to say that they are not also restricting caloric intake compared to expenditure, but there is a definite correlation between this type of diet and weight loss.

> *It seems to me that you either have a religious conviction, or you are trying to sell something.*

Some religions do have dietary restrictions. But refined carb foods that are kosher and hallal are common, and I don't know of any religions that are low carb. Likewise, I haven't seen any offers to sell things in this thread. So I'd go with your claim of "nonsense" here.

>

>>>> *Studies have shown that we eat about 10% less fat calories and about 10% more carbs calories. The shift has been towards carbs, and refined and high-GI-load carbs at that. And we are fatter and sicker than 30 years ago.*

>>>>

>>>> *We eat 10% more sugar calories*  
>>>> *Sweets, chocolates, syrup, sodas, sugared cereals, snacks*  
>>>> *if you look at the data you can see that total caloric consumption is raised because of higher refined sugar consumption*  
>>>> *Now, I would call refined white sugar a carbohydrates*  
>>>> *It needs a special category on its own: white poison*

>

>> *The calories thing still is not a practical predictor of weight gain or loss.*

>

> *When are you going to see the light? There is NO other indicator of energy balance. Energy is measured in calories. Energy balance MUST be crucial to energy storage/utilisation.*

Yes, and figuring out how to achieve that balance is the key. Getting rid of refined sugar would help a great deal, but how can you do that without admitting that it would result in a lower carb diet for most people with a sugar problem? It may not implicate carbs per se, but it could mean that a person needs to end up on a lower carb diet for pragmatic reasons.

>

>> *Counting carbs is much more practical in predicting weight gain or loss, it is just more accurate.*

>

> *So can you eat NO carbs, and lose weight furiously on a 3000 calorie input? You do agree that the conservation of energy law is always upheld, I assume. Could you then tell us what you think happens to every one of these 3000 calories?*

That would of course depend on calorie expenditure. But that's not what that statement said. It talked about carb counts as a predictor. If there's a correlation between carb intake among people who count carbs and calories consumed compared to calories expended, and weight loss tends to be greater than among people who attempt to change the same ratio merely by counting calories, then it would be a more accurate predictor. That's not the same as saying that caloric intake is irrelevant compared to calories expended, and of course it's possible to go on a diet that's restricted in some carbs and gain weight. It's also possible to go on a diet that's restricted in calories and not lose weight due to lethargy.

>

>> *Try it. Cut out carbs, ala*

>> *Atkins induction, and increase your fat intake, and within a couple*

>> *of*

>> *days you will start to lose weight. Or eat nothing but carbs,*

>> *including pasta and bread, and restrict fat, for a few days, and you*

>> *will immediately start putting on weight.*

>

> *And what do you think this weight consists of?*

Cows and sumo wrestlers have such a diet, and they both have a good amount of fat.

>> *For those of us who live low carb, it becomes patently obvious that*

>> *carbs (yes, refined and high-GI/GL) are the true cause of obesity.*

>

> *Nope, sorry, no evidence for this. Even though refined carbs should be*

> *avoided (like all refined foods).*

Some around here will argue (and have) that if you avoid refined foods in favor of whole grains, you are really on a low carb diet. I don't personally agree with that, but it does create a problem. If you agree with it, then you undermine your own argument since you'd be effectively advocating a lower carb diet. But if you disagree, and think that it's the elimination of refined carbs and foods that's an issue, then eliminating carbs per se is not what's being effective. That does not add merit to the claim that low carbs for the sake of low carbs is valid, but it does show how getting rid of all carbs gets rid of the good with the bad, just as low fat diets gets rid of unsaturated fats and beneficial oils as well as it gets rid of saturated fats.

>>>> *And those foods contribute to the problem to some degree. But the*

>>>> *worst*

>>>> *if obviously refined carbs. Are you blind or just stupid. Talk*

>>>> *about*

>>>> *living in denial.*

>>>>

>>> *The worst is surely refined carbs, I'm not denying this*

>>> *I'm just saying that I don't find it honest when you first say "the*

>>> *problem is refined carbohydrates" and then you lump everything*

>>> *together and say "carbs is the problem"*

>>> *Never forget the "refined" before the word carbs, please*  
>>> *I don't think it's okay to lump together corn syrup and pizza with*  
>>> *lentils or quinoa*  
>>>  
>>  
>> *I prefer the High-GI or high-GL carbs terminology. Regardless in the*  
>> *face of people arguing that calories and high-calorie fats are the*  
>> *problem, I will respond with the general statement that they should*  
>> *look at the carbs.*  
>  
> *Nope, the only success will be from looking at total calories.*

The only success will be from looking at whether there was success.

>  
>> *Remember, if you remove the high-GI and high-GL carbs from the diet,*  
>> *it becomes virtually impossible to eat enough carbs to gain weight.*  
>  
> *Utter nonsense! Please look at any food table. Look at the Mendosa*  
> *GI/GL tables for a start.*

Which side are you arguing here? The opposite conclusion is that eating whole grains without restriction is not a problem, which is consistent with your previous arguments that restricting carbs per se is not necessary, as long as caloric intake is in line with caloric expenditure. I don't buy the whole "virtually impossible" argument either, but the argument seems to be saying that eating carbs is not the problem.

>> *It*  
>> *only makes sense that if you restrict carbs, you restrict the refined*  
>> *and high-density carbs and enjoy the low-carb-density and high*  
>> *nutrition whole food carbs.*  
>  
> *Nonsense, see above. I don't eat high GI/GL carbs, and yet my diet is*  
> *high in carbohydrate energy. It can easily be done, without even*  
> *thinking about it.*

But you are both saying the same thing. The caveat is that "restrict carbs" in the first statement really means "restrict refined carbs" if you can really still enjoy the whole food carbs. There's no logical way of saying that you are "restricting carbs" if it's not a carb restriction per se, but a refined food restriction. It would be like saying that it's a calorie restriction since the foods you restrict contain calories. But it's not really a calorie restriction if you substitute other foods with calories, and it's not really a carb restriction if you substitute other carbs.

The bottom line is that you are both agreeing, but one is calling it a carb restriction when it is not. You just said it less ambiguously.

>  
>> *But going into this much detail is not my goal when I say it's the*

>> *carbs.*

>

> *You prefer to be just misleading and misrepresenting the broad issues?*

The broad issues are what to eat. The broad issues are advocating avoiding refined foods and so forth. You differ on what should be counted to accomplish this, while both implicitly agreeing that you think that the other is really lowering calories or eliminating refined foods.

>

>> *I am simply saying don't fixate on calories and fats, start*

>> *thinking about the carbs.*

>

> *And you will not succeed in losing weight unless you think about ALL*

> *calories. A calorie is a calorie is a calorie, so far as energy*

> *balance goes.*

For the past 150,000 years or so, modern man has spent very little time counting calories, and has had a weight problem for an equally short amount of this time. Thinking about calories is not necessary for losing weight, and neither is counting them. Getting on a diet that results in the consumption of fewer calories than are expended will result in losing weight if you never count a calorie in your life. Counting calories works for very few people. If you expend over a million calories a year and there is no effective way of measuring or counting the calories that you expend, and if the number of calories that you must reduce your diet by in order to lose 10 lbs a year is the equivalent of a few pats of butter, then this should be trivial, but it's not. Caloric intake is easy to measure. Caloric consumption is not. Therein lies the rub.

>>>>> *So, saying that high insulin is the problem, it's not the same as*

>>>>> *saying that carbohydrates are the problem*

>>>>

>>>>

>>>> *It pretty much is in the context of what people are being fed*

>>>> *today.*

>>>

>>> *You're right*

>>> *But maybe you should focus more on the context of this group, made*

>>> *of more or less knowledgeable people that know the difference*

>>> *between the two things*

>>

>> *I assume that they know the difference.*

>

> *So why do you confound the two? Sugar and white flour are surely not*

> *to be confused with all carb containing foods, just as hydrogenated*

> *oils are not to be confused with the fat/oil in whole grains, nuts and*

> *other vegetable sources.*

That's an excellent point, but when you put together a list of what sorts of foods are good for people and what sorts of foods are not, and then people

who stick to that advice start to lose weight, we are suddenly told that it's another fad diet and we must stick a label on it.

>

>> *If they don't then they have*

>> *no business commenting on the topic.*

>

> *Yet you are the one saying "carbs must be restricted" when you now*

> *seem to mean that "refined carbs should be restricted"? And even when*

> *this is easily shown to be flawed?*

If it's clear that it means that, and you agree with it, then why argue so much? If somebody else is advocating a diet that works, whether the underlying mechanism is explained or not, and you are agreeing with the underlying recommendation of restricting refined carbs, then what's the problem? You don't agree that counting carbs per se is the solution, but while it's not the underlying mechanism, it's a way of achieving it if it reduces refined carbs. Likewise, recognizing that calorie counts must be reduced compared to expenditure is equally pointless if correct in theory but does not provide a diet that people can stick with. If caloric ratios were indeed the only relevant point, it would be pointless to argue against refined carbs because a diet of pure refined carbs that met the caloric threshold would work just fine. The reality is that it will not work because it ignores factors that are relevant to being able to stick to any diet.

>

> *ALL refined food should be restricted.*

I agree completely, but I would not be able to say that if caloric ratio was the only factor. I also believe that saturated fats should be reduced to a great extent and trans fats should be reduced to an even greater extent.