

WHAT'S UP DOC PETE?

Doc Pete, what is your prescription for health?
(Continued)



Continuing our discussion of my *Peter J. Muran, MD* Prescription for Health, or the **Seven Habits of Health**, Habit Six is **Frequency of Meals**.

Your body is designed to utilize available energy from the foods you eat. Therefore, your food/fuel intake should correspond to the timing of the demands for fuel from your activity.

During the night, while you sleep, your body is experiencing a mini-fast because very little fuel is required during this time. When you awake, the demand for fuel begins. Skipping meals such as breakfast requires your body to increase insulin production to produce glucose fuel from your stores.

You may experience a mid-morning drop in energy because glucose drops to the point where the brain cannot function. Your brain requires an abundant, steady supply of glucose to function. Although your brain accounts for only 2% of your body weight, it consumes 20-30 percent of your readily available glucose.

Adrenaline and cortisol are stimulated to make new glucose for the brain by breaking down muscle, which further suppresses the appetite. Adrenaline and cortisol are anti-insulin hormones. Excess cortisol will lead to fat accumulation. The next time you eat, the pancreas secretes more insulin to counteract what occurred, even if you eat a balanced meal. This sets you up for over production of insulin which could lead to Insulin Resistance or Syndrome-X. Syndrome X could further lead to the development of type II diabetes and heart disease, the leading cause of death in women.

Eating three meals a day to match the food/fuel energy demands of your body is ideal to maintain hormonal and chemistry balance. As we are all unique, some people even require small snacks between meals to maintain energy levels and glucose balance.

Appropriate frequency of meals not only maintains a corresponding appropriate supply of energy but minimizes the demand for excess calorie intake leading to obesity.

Next time, **Habit Three** for Health.



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