Why Eating Less Is Making Menopause Weight Gain WORSE Transcript

(Transcripts are generated by AI and may contain errors)

Why Eating Less Backfires in Menopause

If you are increasingly If you are increasingly cutting back on your cutting back on your cutting back on your calorie intake calorie intake because your weight is because your weight is stagnant, you should stagnant, you should stop for a stop for a minute. The instinct minute. The instinct to eat even less is not an to eat even less is not an option. For many option. For many women during women during perimenopause and perimenopause and menopause, this only menopause, this only makes things worse.

Welcome to my channel. I am Dr. Elizabeth. I am Dr. Elizabeth Tuddiken, a Tuddiken, a licensed licensed licensed naturopath practicing naturopath practicing here in sunny here in sunny Arizona. Before we Arizona. Before we get started, I want to quickly get started, I want to quickly thank everyone who has thank everyone who has recently subscribed. I'm so glad you. I'm so glad you found this channel, I found this channel, I read all your read all your comments and love comments and love to interact with you to interact with you there as much as there as much as possible. So, possible. So, thank you very much. Please thank you very much. Please keep writing. In keep writing. In my practice, I see my practice, I see this very often.

this very often. Reducing calories, Reducing calories, which used to which used to help, is now help, is now imperceptibly harming. By the imperceptibly harming. By the end of this video, you end of this video, you will understand why will understand why eating less eating less can stall can stall progress at this progress at this stage of life and what stage of life and what actually works. We'll actually works. We'll discuss the discuss the discuss the metabolic slowdown that metabolic slowdown that kicks in just a kicks in just a few days after few days after cutting calories, the cutting calories, the muscle loss muscle loss you may not even you may not even realize you're experiencing, and two realize you're experiencing, and two changes that will protect changes that will protect your metabolism your metabolism instead of instead of destroying it. The second one destroying it. The second one surprises almost surprises almost everyone. If you've everyone. If you've cut calories and the cut calories and the weight isn't moving, I weight isn't moving, I want you to hear this before you cut them back again before you cut them back again. Because further. Because further reduction when the weight reduction when the weight is still not only does not is still not only does not help, but usually help, but usually worsens the very worsens the very problem it is supposed to problem it is supposed to solve. The solve. The stop itself is often stop itself is often caused by this caused by this contraction. This is what contraction. This is what no one no one talks about. The advice “eat talks about. The advice “eat less, move more ” was created for the ” was created for the body in its 20s and 30s.

body in its 20s and 30s. At this stage in life, that At this stage in life, that same advice can same advice can imperceptibly start to imperceptibly start to work against you.

work against you. And there are studies that And there are studies that show how quickly show how quickly this happens. In this happens. In one one one controlled controlled controlled study, when study, when people cut their people cut their calorie intake calorie intake in half, their in half, their metabolism metabolism metabolism slowed within the slowed within the first week. And this first week. And this early slowdown early slowdown itself itself itself predicted predicted predicted how much less weight how much less weight they would lose after 6 they would lose after 6 weeks. The body hit the brakes almost immediately.

hit the brakes almost immediately. So please So please hear this. This is not a hear this. This is not a discipline problem. discipline problem. This is a problem with the This is a problem with the mechanism. Your body mechanism. Your body does exactly what does exactly what it was designed to do it was designed to do when fuel levels when fuel levels drop. This is not your drop. This is not your defeat, this is the work of defeat, this is the work of biology. So what biology.

What Adaptive Thermogenesis Actually Does

So what actually actually actually happens happens happens inside your inside your body when you body when you cut calories? More cut calories? More about this later. And this about this later. And this explains why the shutdown explains why the shutdown can happen almost can happen almost instantly. So, here is the instantly. So, here is the mechanism mechanism mechanism behind this stop. In a behind this stop. In a controlled controlled controlled study, three study, three weeks of consuming weeks of consuming half your usual half your usual calories reduced resting energy expenditure by 266 resting energy expenditure by 266 calories per day, and calories per day, and almost half of this almost half of this reduction was reduction was due to something due to something other than just other than just weight loss. This weight loss. This separate component has separate component has a name. This is called a name. This is called adaptive adaptive adaptive thermogenesis, and here's what thermogenesis, and here's what it means. Your it means. Your body body body uses less uses less energy not just because energy not just because you've lost a little weight. In you've lost a little weight. In addition, it actively addition, it actively reduces its own reduces its own energy consumption.

energy consumption. He intentionally He intentionally slows down processes. Think of it like a. Think of it like a thermostat thermostat thermostat set to set to set to protect your home, protect your home, rather than follow rather than follow your chosen settings.

Severely restrict Severely restrict fuel and the thermostat will fuel and the thermostat will turn the furnace off on its own, turn the furnace off on its own, no matter no matter what number you what number you set it to. And if you were set it to. And if you were doing everything the same doing everything the same as always, and it as always, and it suddenly stopped suddenly stopped working, then this is working, then this is exactly why. It's not your exactly why. It's not your fault. But here's the fault. But here's the part that catches part that catches people off guard. This people off guard. This reaction appears reaction appears within a few days of calorie reduction, not calorie reduction, not months. This is why the scale months. This is why the scale can stop can stop almost immediately, even almost immediately, even when on paper when on paper the calculations say the calculations say it shouldn't. And that's the it shouldn't. And that's the first thing I first thing I look at when a woman look at when a woman tells me that her tells me that her deficit should be deficit should be working, but the weight is working, but the weight is n't moving. Before n't moving. Before changing anything, I changing anything, I ask about the basics.

ask about the basics. What does your What does your diet look like? What diet look like? What supplements did you take? And did supplements did you take? And did they take them they take them constantly? How do you constantly? How do you move? And how do you move? And how do you sleep? Very often sleep? Very often the answer lies in the answer lies in one of these. And it is from these. And it is from these indicators that I start indicators that I start searching. So, searching. So, slowing down your slowing down your slowing down your metabolism is only metabolism is only half the battle. The other half the battle. The other half is what you half is what you actually lose actually lose when the number on the scale when the number on the scale finally drops. By finally drops. By the way, before we the way, before we continue, if this makes continue, if this makes sense, sense, sense, hit the hit the subscribe button. I release subscribe button. I release videos like this every week videos like this every week for women going through for women going through perimenopause and perimenopause and menopause, and subscribing menopause, and subscribing really helps really helps other people find them. So here's the.

The Muscle Loss Hidden in Your Weight Loss

So here's the muscle issue, and it's something that muscle issue, and it's something that almost no one almost no one talks about. When the weight talks about. When the weight finally comes off, finally comes off, you lose more than just you lose more than just fat, and how much of fat, and how much of that is muscle depends largely on one thing— how much protein you how much protein you actually eat while actually eat while dieting. Let's start with animal studies, because they animal studies, because they show show show this pattern very clearly. When this pattern very clearly. When researchers only researchers only cut calories cut calories without making other changes, a without making other changes, a disproportionately large disproportionately large portion of the portion of the weight lost was weight lost was muscle, not fat.

muscle, not fat. The body primarily The body primarily gave up muscle mass. Now here is. Now here is the study that is the study that is most most most compelling compelling compelling because it because it was conducted

specifically on postmenopausal women. Two postmenopausal women. Two groups with the same groups with the same calorie deficit.

calorie deficit. The only difference The only difference was in the was in the protein level. The group that protein level. The group that consumed less consumed less protein lost protein lost more than twice more than twice their body weight in the form of their body weight in the form of muscle. About 37% of their loss their loss was muscle, was muscle, compared to compared to about 17% in the group with the about 17% in the group with the highest highest highest protein intake.

protein intake. Same weight loss. Same weight loss. But the condition of the But the condition of the body inside is completely different. body inside is completely different.

So, if you're eating what you So, if you're eating what you think is healthy, think is healthy, cutting calories, cutting calories, but still but still feeling weaker feeling weaker or lethargic, that's probably the or lethargic, that's probably the reason reason reason. The scales don't. The scales don't show where show where exactly the weight came from. And that's why exactly the weight came from. And that's why it matters so much it matters so much.

.. Muscles burn Muscles burn calories even at calories even at rest. So rest. So when you lose them, when you lose them, your resting metabolism your resting metabolism slows down even slows down even more, which only more, which only exacerbates the plateau you exacerbates the plateau you were trying to overcome.

were trying to overcome. You see You see this trap forming. this trap forming. Cut back, lose Cut back, lose muscle, slow down, get stuck even, get stuck even harder, harder, harder, cut back again. If you're already cut back again.

The Fix That Prevents 93 Percent of Muscle Loss

If you're already doing everything right doing everything right but feel like you're giving but feel like you're giving up, up, up, stay with me stay with me because the next part is solving the is solving the problem. So, that's the problem. So, that's the part that changes the part that changes the outcome, and it's outcome, and it's not about not about trying harder. It's about doing something different.

doing something different. Here is a study that Here is a study that completely changed my completely changed my perspective on this perspective on this issue. A review of six issue. A review of six randomized randomized randomized trials found trials found that adding strength that adding strength training to a training to a calorie deficit calorie deficit prevented about 93% of the muscle loss that typically that typically accompanies dieting. 93% accompanies dieting. 93%, and fat loss remained almost and fat loss remained almost unchanged. So, you unchanged. So, you can lose fat and can lose fat and keep almost all of keep almost all of your muscle by just your muscle by just adding one thing. And a adding one thing. And a quick check quick check before we before we move on to the solution.

move on to the solution. If all of this describes If all of this describes you, it is not your you, it is not your personal defeat. This is personal defeat. This is physiology. So physiology. So let's work with let's work with it, not against it.

First, eat First, eat enough protein. When enough protein. When women cut women cut calories, they calories, they usually cut usually cut everything, and everything, and protein intake drops with protein intake drops with them. But protein is them. But protein is what most directly what most directly protects your muscles protects your muscles while you are in a while you are in a deficit. So this is the deficit. So this is the number that should number that should remain high remain high even when the total even when the total number of calories number of calories is reduced. Second, is reduced. Second, add strength add strength training. Even training. Even two classes a two classes a week. This is exactly the week. This is exactly the change that has been proven change that has been proven to protect to protect muscle during muscle during weight loss. You don't weight loss. You don't have to live in have to live in the gym. You the gym. You need to force need to force your muscles to work your muscles to work with a load with a load several times a several times a week. Now, I'm not week. Now, I'm not saying that calories should saying that calories should never be never be reduced. Sometimes it's reduced. Sometimes it's

necessary, and it can be necessary, and it can be done right. In done right. In my practice, I my practice, I use use use GLP-1 drugs with GLP-1 drugs with some patients, some patients, but I intentionally but I intentionally use them in micro- or low doses. Just enough to to dull the appetite. So that dull the appetite. So that a woman can eat a woman can eat a little less without putting a little less without putting too much effort on too much effort on herself. And that's the herself. And that's the key. This smaller key. This smaller amount of food amount of food should be should be as nutritious as possible, with enough, with enough protein and protein and supplements to supplements to fill in any major fill in any major deficiencies. Eating less only works when each only works when each bite provides bite provides more benefit. And that more benefit.

Why Nutrient Density Matters Even More Now

And that brings me to something brings me to something I really I really care about: the quality of what care about: the quality of what you eat. Here's the you eat. Here's the unpleasant truth.

unpleasant truth. Much of Much of today's food today's food is grown on is grown on depleted soil, depleted soil, so it contains so it contains fewer fewer fewer nutrients than nutrients than similar foods from similar foods from generations ago.

generations ago. This means that to This means that to get the get the nutrients your body needs, nutrients your body needs, you will have to eat you will have to eat a lot or a lot or wisely fill in wisely fill in the gaps in your the gaps in your diet. When you diet. When you consume less food, consume less food, this second one becomes even more this second one becomes even more important. However, there is also important. However, there is also real hope. The movement movement for regenerative for regenerative agriculture—a method of agriculture—a method of farming that farming that restores soil and produces restores soil and produces more nutritious more nutritious organic produce—is gaining momentum. I look forward to seeing many more of them in the future.

In the meantime, one of the In the meantime, one of the best ways best ways to get the freshest to get the freshest and most nutritious and most nutritious food is to buy from food is to buy from local organic farmers, markets,, markets, or through CSA programs, or through CSA programs, where you can get a where you can get a box straight from your box straight from your nearest farm. And nearest farm. And if possible, if possible, get to know get to know the farmers who the farmers who grow your food and grow your food and support them in any way you can. Such food is any way you can.

A Real Patient Story of Eating More to Move Forward

Such food is usually harvested usually harvested fresher and grown with fresher and grown with more care than what more care than what travels travels travels across the country to the across the country to the store shelf. So store shelf. So let's compare these two let's compare these two ways. Cutting calories even further when weight loss has stopped does when weight loss has stopped does nothing. This nothing. This slows you down and slows you down and causes you to lose muscle. Adequate nutrition, protein conservation, and, protein conservation, and lifting heavy lifting heavy weights protect the very thing weights protect the very thing that keeps your that keeps your metabolism going. That's the metabolism going. That's the whole difference. So whole difference. So please please please stop stop stop taking taking taking weight loss as a signal to weight loss as a signal to cut calories further.

cut calories further. This is usually a sign that your body body body has adapted, not that has adapted, not that you have you have failed. I remember a failed. I remember a woman who came woman who came to me, constantly to me, constantly cutting back on her diet cutting back on her diet until she hit a until she hit a wall. She was wall. She was so so so disappointed and, disappointed and, frankly, a little broken because she was doing everything because she was doing everything she thought she was supposed to she thought she was supposed to do. We did the do. We did the opposite of what opposite of what her instincts demanded: her instincts demanded: added food, especially added food, especially protein, and started protein, and started simple strength simple strength training a few training a few times a week.

At first, it scared her because eating because eating more more more food seemed like food seemed like a retreat,

but her a retreat, but her body began body began to respond in a way it hadn't in to respond in a way it hadn't in months.

months. She became stronger, her She became stronger, her energy returned, energy returned, and everything began to move and everything began to move in the direction in the direction she had been fighting for she had been fighting for all this time. This is the all this time. This is the change I wish for change I wish for you: no less, but you: no less, but enough and the enough and the right effort.

So let me So let me leave you with the leave you with the most important thing. Weight gain is not Weight gain is not proof that you are not proof that you are not trying hard enough. This is proof trying hard enough. This is proof that your body that your body has adapted to has adapted to less less less fuel, exactly how fuel, exactly how it should work.

it should work. Contract even Contract even harder and your body harder and your body will simply slow down will simply slow down even more. Contract even more. Contract even harder and you even harder and you risk losing the risk losing the very muscles that very muscles that protect your protect your metabolism. None of metabolism. None of this will help this will help shift the weight.

shift the weight. And this is a naturopathic And this is a naturopathic view of this problem. We do not force the body to. We do not force the body to obey by starving it obey by starving it. We. We give it what it give it what it needs. We needs. We remove obstacles remove obstacles and let it and let it do what it already do what it already knows how to do. Your body knows knows how to do. Your body knows how to heal itself. My how to heal itself. My job is to help job is to help remove what stands remove what stands in the way. If you in the way. If you need practical need practical support to support to make this happen, that's what make this happen, that's what I do with I do with patients. You can patients. You can find me at find me at hawthornhealingcenter.com. And if hawthornhealingcenter.com. And if you need an exact you need an exact protein intake for this protein intake for this stage of life and tips on how to achieve it, I how to achieve it, I have a full video on have a full video on protein during protein during menopause. I'll leave menopause. I'll leave the link right here.

the link right here. So the next time So the next time the scale doesn't the scale doesn't budge, budge, budge, I hope you'll I hope you'll hear my voice hear my voice instead of that old man instead of that old man who advised you to eat less.

who advised you to eat less. Instead, eat Instead, eat enough. Take care of enough. Take care of your muscles and trust your muscles and trust that everything is fine with your body that everything is fine with your body. Subscribe,. Subscribe, take care of yourself, and take care of yourself, and see you in the see you in the