

## \*THE STARVATION RESPONSE

### What Happens To The Body When Restrictive Diets Are Used for Weight Loss

This is a physiological response in the body that is much like what happens during hibernation in animals during the winter months. The amount of calorie restriction required to start this biological reaction in the body can vary with each individual. I have seen this phenomena occur with as little as 200-500 calorie reduction a day in individuals trying to lose weight and operating against the body wisdom.

This usually occurs with people who have dieted repeatedly (see **Yo-Yo Diet Cycle**). The body responds quickly when it senses there is lack of food to match the hunger signals it is supplying. The body adapts to a reduction in calories, by doing the following things (all of which sabotage any efforts to actually shed excess weight and keep it off over time):

- ↓ Basal Metabolic Rate- a reduction in the amount of energy/calories burned at rest. The body becomes more efficient at functioning with less food and doesn't burn as many calories as people who eat when they are hungry and stop before they are too full.
- ↑ Lipoprotein Lipase-this is an increase in the enzyme that transports fat to the fat cells for storage. The body becomes more efficient at storing fat like an animal preparing for the famine of winter (the diet).
- ↑ Body Fat Percentage-When a person loses weight on a diet or restricted food plan they lose some lean weight (muscle) and some fat weight. When they regain the weight they gain mostly fat weight back. Therefore repeated loss/regain cycles cause the body composition to become more and more fat with less and less muscle. Strength training can offset this somewhat, but remember the body can't be tricked, it is very intelligent.
- ↑ Abdominal Fat-With each loss/regain cycle, body fat is increasingly distributed in the abdominal area. Abdominal fat is associated with higher risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes type II (insulin resistance), and high blood pressure. Redistribution of body fat to abdominal area occurs following restrictive eating (or weight loss not directed by body wisdom) and then re-feeding (weight gain) which is more related to the development of heart disease than fat in other areas of the body.
- ↑ Craving for Fatty Foods-this is the body's natural response to the starvation of dieting. Many individuals begin craving more calorie dense fatty type foods following restriction of intake which also unknowingly contributes to rapid weight gain.



**\*The best thing to prevent and reverse the Starvation Response (which eventually makes you fatter) is to eat in response to hunger and stop in response to fullness! Practice Responsive Eating and follow the body's inner wisdom (Choose inner Wisdom)!**

