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Rate of Change

I spent hours looking at the data in “The Biggest Loser” study. I did numerous calculations trying to figure out where the changes in caloric use occurred that could explain the dip in resting metabolic rate that made the headlines. There are several possible explanations.

Today I’ll give you the most probable reason: the subjects lost weight too fast. The average was 4.25 pounds per week and for some, it was double that. While that can win contests, it doesn’t allow the body to adjust to the tremendous changes that should be occurring.

Think about it. There are blood vessels, nerve cells, and fat cells that haven’t been reabsorbed. There are hormonal patterns that have been established based on specific proportions of body fat and muscle. The liver has to learn a new pattern of insulin use. Every system has to change, and there isn’t enough time to do so before the contest is over. The rate of change was simply too great for the body to keep up with.

That can explain why weight was easy to regain: the infrastructure was still there and could immediately begin to restock. But that still leaves the difference in metabolic rate. What explains that? That’s a lot more complicated so I’ll finish up on Saturday.

What are you prepared to do today?



Dr. Chet

Reference: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/oby.21538/epdf>

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