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Could Your Rhythms Be Keeping You Fat?

You eat well and you exercise, but you still can't lose any weight. What if the answer was in the natural rhythms of your body? I'm not talking about dance moves; I'm talking about circadian rhythms, the natural 24-hour cycles based on day and night. Since we can pretty much control the amount of light indoors 24-hours per day, our natural rhythms can be in disarray.

I've talked about the pacemaker of the heart several times over the years. It turns out that there's an area in the brain called the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN) that acts as the central pacemaker for circadian rhythms. It's found in the hypothalamus and for a small group of cells, it seems to do a lot.

In the mornings in response to daylight, the SCN sends signals to raise body temperature and produce hormones such as cortisol. Time to get up! The SCN also responds to light by delaying the release of other hormones such as melatonin that help us sleep. When it gets dark the eyes signal the SCN that it's night. Melatonin levels rise in the evening and stay elevated throughout the night, promoting sleep.



What does this have to do with being fat and not being able to lose weight? Now that we know how this pacemaker works, it turns out it could be an important factor. I'll cover recent research the rest of the week.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

Reference: www.sleepfoundation.org.

WGVU FM 88.5/95.3 **npr** ***Straight Talk on Health***

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