

Review of The Hibernation Diet

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It works while you sleep! The tagline on the book cover speaks volumes. But is it myth or reality? Fact or fiction? It doesn't take the authors, Mike and Stuart McInnes of Edinburgh, Scotland, long to engage the debate.

The first page includes these and other similarly astonishing claims: "Discover energy resources you never knew you had . . . Wake up feeling refreshed . . . your whole body will benefit." "The Hibernation Diet is entirely different from all other fad, low-calorie, and food-excluding diets. Yes, you can sleep, and lose weight all at the same time." "You will feel better at work . . . even your sex life will be improved."

Almost every week another diet or weight loss scheme is introduced to the American audience. Book stores reserve whole sections for diet books. Magazines and periodicals are filled with articles on how to shed fat and lose inches in days. Television talk shows parade a host of diet and weight loss experts espousing the latest fads, gimmicks, as well as sensible and non-sensible schemes for healthy eating and weight reduction. And for good reason!

We are in the midst of a pandemic of obesity in America. Over 20 percent or nearly 60 million people in the United States can be diagnosed as medically obese, a category defined as exceeding recommended weight by more than 20 percent. The secondary complications of insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes mellitus, hyperlipidemia, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke, cancer, and arthritis afflict millions.

Could it be that one solution lies in sleep? Mike and Stuart McInnes believe so. But not just any sleep, "recovery sleep" made possible only when you go to bed with a fully stocked liver, fueled by eating honey. This is potential good news for the honey industry.

Most of us have been told that eating before bedtime is not good for you. "It will just turn to fat". This is just one of the myths busted by The Hibernation Diet. According to the authors, eating an hour or two before bedtime is the best way one can be assured of going to sleep with a liver adequately stocked with glycogen. And honey is the best way to accomplish this.

Honey contains an ideal ratio of fructose to glucose. Because of this, a tablespoon of honey before bed is rapidly incorporated into the liver and converted into glycogen, leaving the brain with plenty of fuel to get through the 8 hours or so of our night fast. When the brain is well fueled during rest, it releases a whole series of what Mike and Stuart call recovery hormones or chemical agents in the body that promote the natural recovery of muscle, bone and other tissues while we sleep.

In addition, honey causes a slight spike in release of insulin which is responsible for an increase in brain chemicals that induce sleep. The authors have coined a new acronym (almost) to describe what happens in the body. They call it the *Honey-Insulin-Melatonin* or **HYMN** Cycle. By eating honey before bed, one sleeps better, recovers faster and burns fat in the process. In fact, by going to sleep with a well stocked liver, one burns more fat during 8 hours of sleep than during 1 hour on the treadmill in moderate aerobic exercise - - maybe even as much as 10 times more.

Without adequate fuel, the brain releases other hormones, adrenalin and cortisol, which rob muscle tissue of protein to make glucose for brain fuel. The chronic release of these stress hormones is what many think may contribute to the causes of hypertension, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes mellitus, strokes and many stress related inflammatory diseases.

For chronic dieters and health conscious individuals alike, eating honey before bed is welcome good news. For honey producers, the importance of liver fueling by eating honey at bedtime is

only the beginning of the good news contained in the Hibernation Diet. The diet may be the spark needed to ignite a honey market that has gone through a slump in the last year or two. Consider the impact on honey consumption in the U.S. if only 1% of the population, or 30 million people, followed the recommendations of The Hibernation Diet. Honey consumption would go up over 55 million pounds a year representing more than 40% of the current domestic honey crop.

The Hibernation Diet was first published in the United Kingdom by Souvenir Press, LTD in 2006. The UK version did not include the scientific references that provide the rationale and basis for the diet. Without the references, the reader is left to his/her own resources to validate the truth of the book.

When WorldClassEmpire (WCE) was approached by the authors in the fall of 2006 to consider publishing the book in the United States, questions relating to the science behind the diet were among the first issues discussed. Mike and Stuart were extremely forthcoming about sharing their research. They provided references and additional literature that validated the principles of The Hibernation Diet. When WCE secured the publication rights, this material was put back in the U.S. edition by mutual agreement between WCE and the authors.

Rather than footnoting and referencing, the editors of the new edition have neatly packaged all of the science and reference material in one appendix to the original text. This section is entitled, the "95 Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Honey with Respect to Liver Fueling." Here in simple question and answer format, the science behind the diet is explained and more than 30 references are listed.

To an American audience, this talk about liver fueling may sound a bit strange. Our culture focuses more on the stomach or the heart. Rarely does one find a leading medical journal or nutritional magazine featuring an article about the liver. It just isn't cool or sexy to write about. And when was the last time someone told you that their "liver was out of sorts." For the European audience, fueling the liver is not a strange concept. Recently, on two separate morning television shows, a U.S physician was heard speaking of the liver as the primary organ responsible for fueling the brain. Perhaps the message is filtering across the "pond."

The good news for all readers of the book is that one does not have to fully understand the science to experience the results offered by The Hibernation Diet. All you need is a little honey and eight hours of sleep or so each night. What could be simpler? According to the authors, most who take their suggestions about "fueling" the liver before bedtime will notice positive results within two weeks. Though results will vary from person to person depending on metabolism and genetics, the reported results have included gradual but consistent weight loss of 3 to 5 pounds a month, relief from gastric reflux symptoms, improved quality of sleep, and increased energy during the day - - all from eating a spoonful of honey at bedtime.

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