

The Hibernation Diet

Foreword to U.S. Edition

Rarely in medicine and healthcare do revolutionary therapeutic discoveries occur. In my lifetime of 60+ years a few significant revolutions in medical treatments come to mind. The synthesis of corticosteroids for oral administration, the discovery of penicillin and the subsequent widespread use of antibiotics, the synthesis of H2 antagonists used for the treatment of peptic acid disease and other GI ailments, the application of computer technology in radiology and imaging (CT scanning and Magnetic Resonance Imaging), the use of coronary angiography in the treatment of coronary vascular disease - - are a few that deserve mention. The occurrence of truly revolutionary discovery in medicine is measured in years, if not decades.

Even more rarely do revolutionary nutritional discoveries gain acceptance among the medical community. In spite of our exponentially expanding knowledge base in human physiology and cellular biology, changes in the way we eat, i.e. diet, seemingly take generations to gain credence in the medical literature.

There are several reasons for this, not the least of which is the fact that doctors know little about nutrition. Ask your physician how many nutrition courses he/she had in medical school! Nutrition is all about wellness. Medicine is all about disease and its various treatments. The prescription of appropriate nutritional therapy is relegated to second place behind medication regimens, surgical interventions, or even psychotherapy in some cases. Nutritional counseling is not covered by most insurance plans and thus not deserving of attention by practitioners or patients. A physician who practices wellness and focuses on nutritional advice often resorts to "selling" nutritional supplements and vitamins, thereby earning a dubious comparison to a "medicine man" peddling his wares from a horse drawn wagon. And finally, when confronted with the reality of lifestyle diseases, such as obesity, hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, and even some cancers, most patients ask, "Can't you just give me a pill, Doc?" rather than face the necessity of change in eating habits. Many doctors are all too willing to comply.

Mike and Stuart McInnis, in their short book, *The Hibernation Diet*, have challenged the conventional wisdom of professional nutritionists and lifelong dieters alike. Their premise - - that ***you can lose weight while you sleep*** - - is based on one overlooked, yet none-the-less valid, physiologic principle. The human body consumes stored fuel (or fat) differently during an approximate eight hour sleep cycle than it does during the balance of our awake state. ***That simple principle is, I believe, a signal event - a significant revolutionary "discovery" in the science of nutrition during our generation.***

Mike and Stuart are not "medicine men". They are not trying to sell you a pill or a supplement. They offer no gimmicks or fads. Nor do they engage in calorie counting. They simply advocate sound and balanced nutritional habits along with moderate resistance exercise as the keys to healthy living. And by challenging a myth that has existed for more than a generation - - "you should not eat anything in the hour or two before bed" - - with hard data from direct observational studies, they advance a principle that, at best, needs to be tried by thousands stuck in the latest fad diets of today, and at least, deserves longer term population studies.

Their principles are simple to understand and apply which encourages easy adoption by the general public. There is nothing in the Hibernation Diet that can hurt you, unless of course you conclude after careful reading that we should all mimic bears and sleep for the better part of the winter. [Don't try it. Our bodies store fat and burn it during sleep all right, but they do not have the capability to suspend or slow critical organ functioning for sustained periods of time!]

By pointing out a principle that has been overlooked in the United States, one can expect challenges by the established experts in nutrition, exercise physiology and medicine. That principle - that ***the human body burns more fat during sleep than it does during vigorous aerobic exercise*** - has plenty of documentation in the literature outside of the US. In time, the experts in the US will catch up after they have completed their own studies. We are not very accepting of scientific studies done elsewhere.

Acceptance of the principles advocated in the Hibernation Diet will not come overnight. It took Dr. Atkins nearly a generation for his principles of balanced protein and carbohydrate intake to gain credence in the medical literature. His single handed attack on the "dietary fat hypothesis" of the '60s continued for more than 30 years before medical researchers admitted that fat was not the problem - - excess carbohydrate that triggered excessive insulin production was! But that is another story for another day.

Fortunately, acceptance by the experts is not required for you 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? Most of us (and I include myself) that have taken Mike and Stuart's suggestions about "fueling" the liver before bedtime have noticed positive results within 2 weeks. Though results will vary from person to person depending on metabolism and genetics, I am convinced that most who try The Hibernation Diet will be pleasantly surprised at the results. "You can have more energy and lose weight while you sleep!"

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