

## You Say You Want a Resolution

By Dr. Theresa Tsingis

**R**esearch shows that half of the people who make New Year's resolutions have given up on them by the end of June. If you're tired of declaring to lose weight at the beginning of every year and then breaking that vow, try gaining freedom from the endless cycle this year. There is a way to eat that can result in a healthier, more energetic version of yourself. There are workable, long-term ways to make good eating stick and knowing more about your unique metabolism has a lot to do with success.

We all share similarities in metabolism, yet there are ways in which we are metabolically unique. For example, we share the fundamentals of digestion and absorption. What differs between us is how well those processes work. Factors such as age, genetic inheritance, enzyme production and lifestyle influence digestion, absorption, and blood

sugar levels, sometimes in profound ways.

For example, after about age 30 or with certain gastrointestinal conditions, the digestive system produces less digestive juices, resulting in less nutrient absorption. An important example involves protein. When less protein is digested and absorbed, less will be incorporated into the body. Without protein, muscles cannot enlarge or maintain themselves. The immune system won't work optimally, and many metabolic processes can be affected. This has consequences if you are trying to become more fit.

It is imperative that you lose fat, not lean muscle, during a weight loss program. Muscle mass keeps metabolism going at a healthy rate, while fat has a slower metabolism. Two people weighing the same but with different body compositions have two different metabolisms and

also different levels of health.

One way your diet resolution can be more effective is by understanding your metabolic uniqueness. There are several ways to learn more about your metabolism. A quick way is through Bio-electrical Impedance Analysis (BIA), a type of body composition test which is very accurate, convenient and reliable.

This test provides your personal basal metabolic rate (how many calories you actually burn daily), and the accurate densities of body tissues such as fat and lean mass. BIA can be used to calculate your daily protein requirements and give clues to cell membrane health and water distribution. This test is relatively inexpensive and gauges weight loss effectively.

Another metabolic pitfall to rule out would be thyroid insufficiency. This can usually be done by your medical doctor. Nutri-

tionists with a functional nutrition perspective may also be able to uncover underlying hormonal imbalances that contribute to metabolic problems.

It's wise to design your eating for maximum health, energy and fitness based on your metabolism. This year, your diet resolution can make sense once and for all. As the Beatles sang, "Ya know, it's gonna be alright...!" Have a Happy and Healthy New Year.

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