

THE MIRACLE CURE FOR OBESITY

NOW THAT YOU HAVE LEARNED ABOUT THE BIOCHEMICAL, ANATOMICAL, AND PATHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF OBESITY, IT'S TIME FOR YOUR REWARD--THE MIRACLE CURE. AND I'M GOING TO LET YOU IN ON A PROFESSIONAL SECRET THAT I ONLY TELL MY FAVORITE PATIENTS: THERE'S NOT MERELY ONE MIRACLE CURE FOR OBESITY. IN FACT, THERE ARE THOUSANDS.

JUST WATCH LATE-NIGHT TELEVISION, WHEN LONELY OVERWEIGHT PEOPLE ARE BOMBARDED WITH ADVERTISEMENTS FOR PILLS, EXERCISE MACHINES AND "NATURAL" VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTS. ANOTHER DOZEN ARE DESCRIBED IN TABLOID MAGAZINES AT YOUR SUPERMARKET CHECK-OUT COUNTER. OTHERS UNKNOWN TO YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN TRIED AND DISCARDED ONTO THE GARBAGE HEAP OF FAILED THERAPIES.

THE KEMPNER INSTITUTE AT DUKE UNIVERSITY IN NORTH CAROLINA WAS ONCE A DISTINGUISHED MEDICAL "SPA", A HAVEN FOR THE OVERWEIGHT AND HYPERTENSIVE IN THE 1950'S. AT CONSIDERABLE EXPENSE, PATIENTS WOULD STAY FOR WEEKS OR MONTHS, SUBSISTING ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON STEAMED RICE. DID THIS TREATMENT WORK? OF COURSE, SINCE ANYONE BEING FED EXTREMELY LOW CALORIE, LOW SALT FOODS WILL UNDERGO PROFOUND, BENEFICIAL CHANGES. HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT FROM THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO LIVING ONLY ON BREAD AND WATER IN PRISON? THE ANSWER: THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT PICKED UP HIS DINNER BILL.

"INMATES" AT THE KEMPNER INSTITUTE WERE UNABLE TO CHOOSE FOODS FROM A MENU. ONE FORMER PATIENT TOLD ME WHAT HAPPENED WHEN HER FAMILY JOINED HER FOR THANKSGIVING DINNER: EACH PERSON HONORED THE PILGRIMS' CELEBRATION WITH A BOWL OF STEAMED RICE, TOPPED BY A FEW VERY THIN STRIPS OF TURKEY AS A SPECIAL HOLIDAY TREAT.

AT BEDTIME, EACH PATIENT LEFT A 24-HOUR URINE COLLECTION OUTSIDE HIS OR HER ROOM. THE SAMPLE WAS TESTED FOR PROTEIN, TOTALLY ABSENT FROM RICE. IF ANY PROTEIN WAS FOUND IN THE URINE JUG, THE PATIENT WAS EXPELLED; HE OR SHE WAS SOMEHOW CHEATING.

BUT HOW COULD PEOPLE CHEAT DURING THE RICE-ONLY BREAKFAST, LUNCH OR DINNER? THE ANSWER LAY NOT AT DUKE UNIVERSITY BUT IN THE SURROUNDING SUBURBS WHERE GOURMET RESTAURANTS OF EVERY TYPE LURED THE FAMISHED AND CRANKY PATIENTS--IN OTHER WORDS, REAL FOOD. HOW MANY INDIVIDUALS RETURNED TO THEIR HOMETOWNS READY TO BEGIN A LIFE OF RICE? WOULD YOU? WAS THE KEMPNER RICE DIET AN EXAMPLE OF "LIFESTYLE MODIFICATION"? ASK THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO.

LET'S JUMP AHEAD SEVERAL DECADES TO A SCHOLARLY ACADEMIC STUDY ON THE PURPORTED NUTRITIONAL PROPERTIES OF GREEN TEA. DR. FRANK SVEC PUT LABORATORY RATS INTO FOUR DIFFERENT CAGES, AND THEIR RAT FOOD WAS "SUPPLEMENTED" WITH FOUR DIFFERENT AMOUNTS OF GREEN TEA EXTRACT, FROM 0 TO 10%. MIRACULOUSLY, THE RATS EXPOSED

TO THE HIGHEST AMOUNT OF GREEN TEA EXTRACT "LOST WEIGHT". BEFORE YOU RUSH OUT TO BUY A BOTTLE (OR THE ACTUAL RAT FOOD) CONSIDER THE REASON THAT THIS HERB "CURES" OBESITY: IT TASTES TERRIBLE. THE RATS WOULD RATHER STARVE THAN EAT IT!

THE QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL OF WEIGHT LOSS HAS ALSO MATCHED DESPERATE DIETERS WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM. LEGEND TELLS US THAT CERTAIN DIET PILLS IN THE 1950'S CONTAINED AN ACTIVE INGREDIENT UNAPPROVED BY THE FDA: TAPEWORMS. AFTER BEING SWALLOWED INSIDE A GELATIN CAPSULE AND FINDING ITS WAY TO THE "PATIENT'S" SMALL INTESTINE, THE TAPEWORM WOULD AFFIX ITSELF TO THE GUT WALL AND SHARE MEALS WITH ITS HOST. THEN, WHEN THE DESIRED WEIGHT WAS ACHIEVED, THE TAPEWORM WAS KILLED BY THE PROPER ANTIBIOTICS. DON'T LOOK FOR THIS REMEDY TODAY; YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE DOESN'T COVER THIS TREATMENT.

DURING MY NINE YEARS AS A COLLEAGUE OF DR. ATKINS, PATIENTS TOLD ME OF THEIR FUTILE ATTEMPTS AT PROFOUND WEIGHT LOSS DESPITE BUYING HIGHLY PROMOTED EXERCISE MACHINES. YOU PROBABLY DON'T REMEMBER THE WIGGLING MOTORIZED BELTS THAT WERE APPLIED DIRECTLY ONTO THE ABDOMEN, SHAKING IT TO AND FRO AND SUPPOSEDLY SQUEEZING FAT OUT OF THE SUBCUTANEOUS TISSUES. WHERE ARE THEY NOW THAT WE NEED THEM THE MOST? HOW ABOUT THOSE OVERSIZED PLASTIC BOWLS THAT HELP YOU DEVELOP A MUSCULAR TORSO JUST BY SITTING IN THEM AND TENSING YOUR MIDRIF? DO YOU

THINK THE OLYMPIC GYMNASTICS TEAM HAS DOZENS OF THEM?

EVEN "REAL" EXERCISE MACHINES DON'T WORK UNLESS THE INDIVIDUAL ACTUALLY USES THEM. DOZENS OF PATIENTS HAVE MIRTHFULLY TOLD ME THAT THEY INDEED HAD PURCHASED TREADMILLS AND EXERCISE BICYCLES LONG AGO BUT NOW USE THEM PRIMARILY TO DRY LAUNDRY IN THEIR BASEMENTS. WANT TO LOOK LIKE ONE OF THOSE SKINNY, MUSCULAR MODELS THAT YOU SEE ON TELEVISION, WORKING UP A SWEAT ON WEIGHT-LIFTING CONTRAPTIONS THAT LOOK LIKE SMALL HELICOPTERS? FIRST PUT ON YOUR GLASSES AND READ THE SMALL PRINT THAT ACCOMPANIES THE GRANDIOSE ADVERTISING: "RESULTS NOT TYPICAL".

THANKS TO THE MIRACLE OF THE HUMAN AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM, "FIGHT OR FLIGHT" IS NEVER ACCOMPANIED BY HUNGER PAINS. WHEN THE CAVEMAN WAS WRESTLING OR RUNNING FROM A SABER-TOOTHED TIGER, THE LAST THING ON HIS MIND WAS DINNER PLANS. WE CAN THANK THE CHEMICAL EPINEPHRINE (ADRENALIN) FOR THIS PHENOMENON AND WE CAN ALSO PURCHASE IT AT THE DRUG STORE, WHETHER AS A PRESCRIBED "DIET PILL" (AN ANOREXIGENIC) OR AN ANALOGOUS HERB (LIKE THE RECENTLY BANNED EPHEDRA).

THESE MEDICATIONS CERTAINLY WORK, BUT UNFORTUNATELY, OBESE PEOPLE ARE THE MOST LIKELY TO HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, HEART PROBLEMS, AND INSULIN RESISTANCE, ALL CONDITIONS THAT ARE WORSENERD DANGEROUSLY BY "STIMULANTS". "DIET PILLS" HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO PLACE IN THE

TREATMENT OF OVERWEIGHT, NOR DOES THE UNAPPROVED USE OF THYROID OR ADRENAL HORMONES. ON THE DAY THAT WE FIND A SAFE, CHEAP AND CURATIVE DRUG THAT WILL RID THE UNITED STATES OF OBESITY, PONCE DE LEON'S FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH WILL SPURT UP FROM THE GROUND LIKE OLD FAITHFUL.

AS MEDICAL RESEARCHERS LOOK IN VAIN FOR THE PILL OF EVERYONE'S DREAMS, SURGEONS KEEP THINKING OF NEW WAYS TO CHOP AWAY THE PROBLEM. YOUR ABDOMINAL FAT CAN BE SUCKED OUT THROUGH A HIGH-TECH VACUUM CLEANER OR SLICED AWAY LIKE UNWANTED MATTRESS STUFFING (THIS SOUNDS BETTER WHEN CALLED A "PANNICULECTOMY"). PERHAPS YOU WOULD PREFER TO HAVE YOUR STOMACH "STAPLED" OR YOUR INTESTINES SHORTED? THIS DEPENDS ON WHETHER YOU'D RATHER UPCHUCK OR POOP OUT ALL THAT NASTY FOOD.

WHY BOTHER WITH SURGERY, IN FACT, WHEN YOU COULD SIMPLY WEAR A CORSET OR A GIRDLE? I KNOW A FEW FAMOUS PEOPLE THAT PREFERRED THIS ALTERNATIVE. DON'T BOTHER TO GUESS WHO, BECAUSE I'M NOT TELLING. AND BESIDES, I'M ONLY CONCERNED ABOUT YOU.

NOW THAT WE'VE DISCUSSED EVERY POSSIBLE WRONG WAY OF LOSING WEIGHT, LET'S DO IT CORRECTLY IN SIMPLE STAGES, RETHINKING BEHAVIOR AND CHANGING EVERY ASPECT OF PERSONAL APPEARANCE. NOT ONE "THERAPY" DISCUSSED ABOVE WORKS PERMANENTLY, AND ALL AVOID THE ABSOLUTE REALITY THAT WEIGHT LOSS, SELF-CONFIDENCE, SOCIAL PROWESS, AND MAGNETIC APPEAL MUST ALL BE ADDRESSED SIMULTANEOUSLY.

HAVE A GOOD LAUGH AT ALL OF THESE RIDICULOUS TREATMENTS.
GETTING YOURSELF INTO GOOD SHAPE IS NO FUN; ONLY THE
RESULTS ARE!