

## Obesity in America Transcript (3/01/2024)

Mary Perry

So Dr. Sears, today we're going to talk about obesity in America. What is your opinion on the current state of the obesity epidemic?

Dr. Barry Sears

Well, first of all, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to see that it's growing. But that's not the problem. The problem is far more insidious and far more detrimental to the future of American health care.

Mary Perry

So let's talk a bit about metabolism. Can you give us some insight into what the role of metabolism is in the obesity epidemic?

Dr. Barry Sears

Well, the reason that you gain weight is not because you're eating, quote, the wrong foods is because your metabolism is now disrupted. Rather than burning fuel as food for energy, you're now storing it as fat.

There lies the problem. So it's not "what's the best diet"? It's how do I get my metabolism to become more effective? Like turning up the carburation of a car to get more mileage from the gas in the tank? And so when we talk about obesity, we had to go deeper into the molecular biology of metabolism and why it's causing such a distress in terms of our health care system.

The reason is because as you have more visceral, fat, this is the fat basically called belly fat, this becomes the breeding ground, the breeding ground for a type of cell called a senescence cell. These are also known as zombie cells. And everyone knows zombies are bad. Well, these are especially bad because what they do, they accelerate the aging process.

They accelerate the development of chronic disease. So as you see the obesity epidemic visually, you can basically look inside each of your 30 trillion cells and see something is going wrong and there will only be a bad outcome. So this is why really this obesity epidemic is so much more critical than simply one of basically my pants don't fit.

Mary Perry

So how would somebody know if they had zombie cells and how do you address it or combat them if you do?

Dr. Barry Sears

Well, it's really hard to tell because it doesn't take very many zombie cells in an organ to cause real problems, like maybe 1 or 2%. So how are you going to find 1 or 2% of cells that are zombie cells?

And the answer is you're not. So is there some marker? Is there some marker in the blood that can tell us whether or not these zombie cells are beginning to increase in every organ in our body? Fortunately, there is. And that marker is called HOMA-IR. It's a marker of what is called insulin resistance. Insulin resistance is the first sign your metabolism is no longer working very effectively.

And what that means is your body's ability to get rid of these zombie cells is also compromised. So in many ways, think of these zombie cells as the equivalent of cancer. Now, basically, these are cells which are not basically developing uncontrolled growth, but basically increasing inflammation. And that's the problem.

Mary Perry

And so if somebody has high levels of insulin resistance or their HOMA-IR is high, how do they address it?

Dr. Barry Sears

Well, the best way to address it is basically by the diet. Well, there we have a problem with diet. Everybody's an expert. Everybody's a biohacker. They're a blogger. Let's talk about science. So if we really want to basically say what's the best diet and say, can we prove it? We say, what is the best diet to reduce insulin resistance?

Well, here the data is pretty clear. Basically, it is a calorie restricted diet. They say, my God, I don't want to restrict calories. I'll be hungry the rest of my life. Nobody wants to be hungry. So you really want to get a calorie restricted diet without hunger and without fatigue. And if you can find that diet, then basically you stick with it for the rest of your life.

Why? Because you want to kill the zombie cells. Kill the zombie cells, and you're gonna live longer. Now, what is the outlines of such a diet? One, it has to have adequate protein at every meal. Why? You have to shut down hunger. If you're always hungry, you're not going to follow a calorie restricted diet. But that's only the beginning.

Then you have to balance it with things called carbohydrates. Oh no, those evil carbohydrates! No, they're not evil. They're pretty essential, but they're not all the same. So which ones are the best for the best? The ones your grandmother told you to eat: The vegetables. The non-starchy vegetables. And in reality, the ABCs: the artichoke hearts, the asparagus, the broccoli, cauliflower and the spinach.

Why? They have the best ideal overall balance of protein to carbohydrate to go with the protein. Now, stop right there? Not quite, because there's two other things you have to have to basically destroy zombie cells. One is adequate levels of omega three fatty acids in your diet. American diet is pathetic in terms of the levels of omega three fatty acids.

And the second aspect is adequate levels of polyphenols. Now, what are polyphenols? These are the chemicals that give fruits and vegetables their color. Now they do far more. They basically, if you get adequate levels in the blood, they can now activate the metabolism to basically start burning fat faster. And as you burn fat faster, they're breeding ground for zombie cells dries up.

And so what happens? You lose weight and you live longer. Not a bad deal. But the secret is you have to have all three of those components working together. And that's the basis and foundation of metabolic engineering.

Mary Perry

So essentially, you need to figure out a way that you can stick to these dietary requirements for the rest of your life. So it's really a lifestyle modification.

Dr. Barry Sears

And there's a problem. It's saying, "I can't do it. It's so hard!" You've had this experience when you did your clinical clinical trials at Harvard. You had highly, highly motivated people who really want to basically advance medical science and treat themselves. And what happens? They're good for about three months and then they fall off the wagon.

So okay, that's human nature. So we had to wipe out that diet? No. What you have to do is to make the diet more desirable, easier to use, more fun to do than what you're currently eating. If it's not, it's not going to happen. And that's why one of the things we've done is to basically put a lot of effort in developing what I call zone foods.

These are foods that have the appropriate balance of protein to carbohydrate that shut down hunger. And by shutting down hunger, I'm never hungry. But I'm eating the foods I like to eat. They're easy to prepare. They're even easier to consume. And here's the best part. Even easier to clean up. So now you cut the Gordian knot of why people can't be compliant.

I t's not saying what food you should eat. You're saying, what foods do you like to eat? And most people will see the three P's: pizza, pasta and pastries. So there's the challenge. Not to get a better drug, but to develop the three P's that can shut down hunger for a lifetime. And now if you add now the omega three fatty acids and you add the polyphenols and then basically you have a winning combination that can basically now keep the zombie cell population under control. Oh, you also lose weight.

No, no, it's not losing weight. You can do that by cutting off your left arm. It's losing fat. So what's the benefits of eating the foods I like to eat the rest of my life? I will lose fat and I will live longer. Stop, full stop. I'm done. Count me in.

Mary Perry

Amazing. So, Dr. Sears, if people wanted to get more information on the concepts of metabolic engineering and where to purchase these foods, where should they go?

Dr. Barry Sears

Well, to get more information, because, first of all, knowledge is power. You want to come to DrSears.com. Why? Because this is complex biochemistry. My job is to basically not only understand it, but to articulate it and say so that people will say, I get it, this makes sense. So without that knowledge, you're basically like a piece of flotsam in the sea of life.

You're going to go nowhere. You have to have basically a direction. And then basically, once you understand the science, what the potentials are, then you can basically find, you know, where areas where you can go. Where's the best area? I'd have to say probably Zoneliving.com because that's where we have basically developed the products. When did all of our clinical testing and use that as a site for delivery of the technology that allows you to say, I can stop hunger. And how long will it take you?

The answer is pretty clear. One meal. They say, well, that's pretty strong science! I say, Yeah. Now, here's the hard part. You've got to do it meal after meal after meal the rest of your life.