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Summer's revealing fashions are just weeks away. But if you're feeling a little larger than you would like, you may want to check out **Dr. Melissa Hershberg's** new book, **The Hershberg Diet**. She knows losing weight can be frustrating, and she has used science to make it easier. Below she shares the secrets of "hotty" foods and eating smarter to slimmer with **DolceDolce** readers.

DD: In the Hershberg Diet you talk about the 4th macronutrient. Can you explain it, please?

Dr. H: The term - the 4th macronutrient - refers to water. But the emphasis is not on drinking water, but rather on eating water. Most people, doctors and dieticians included, only address the three basic macronutrients – protein, carbohydrates and fat - when they discuss nutrition. However, using food labels and basic math, I've proven that it is actually the water content of food that is the most important factor to consider when it comes to judging how good a food is for weight loss. Water-rich foods such as fish, poultry, lean meats, vegetables, fruits, and dairy are mathematically proven to be the best for weight loss, as they fill you up for very few calories. They have low ratios of calories to mass and volume. Dry foods, however - cereals, crackers, breads, cookies, chips, nuts, raisins, beef jerky, etc. - can lead to quick weight gain, as every bite that's put into your mouth is a calorie. There's no calorie-free water to take up space. People easily overeat these foods and pack on the pounds quickly as a result.



Photo by: Natalie Chiu

The **World Health Organization** agrees. It attributes the epidemic of global obesity to an increased consumption of foods that are energy dense. In other words, people are eating foods that have too many calories of energy packed into too small of a package. This caloric density often occurs as a result of drying and dehydrating, a process that is largely done by the food industry for the purpose of creating foods with long shelf lives. For example, grapes, which are water-rich, go bad, whereas raisins, the dried form of grapes, do not. Beef tenderloin spoils quickly, whereas beef jerky, the dehydrated version, does not. Crackers, chips, cookies, pretzels, cereals, dried fruits are calorie-dense foods that are low in the 4th macronutrient (water) and therefore lead to unnatural spikes in blood sugar and insulin and easy over-consumption with the end result being weight gain and a host of chronic diseases ranging from diabetes to heart disease and even some cancers.

DD: You also discuss "hotty" foods that can help burn calories. How does this work?

Dr. H: Certain foods actually cause our body to burn calories, simply by eating them. This is because it requires energy to break down the chemical bonds in the food. As a result of this work, calories are burned off and heat is released in the process – hence the name "hotty." Think of eating "hotty" foods as exercise for your digestive tract.

Protein rich foods, such as fish, chicken, seafood, egg whites, turkey, nuts, and lean dairy and meats are the most “hotty”, whereas simple and low fiber carbs, including candy, juice, pop, white bread, rice, pasta, chips, pretzels, and doughnuts are the least “hotty.” If we want to maximize our calorie burning potential, we should include protein at meals and snacks as often as possible. Here are examples of other “hotty” foods and beverages:

Carbs: The more complex and high in fiber, such as the veggies, fruits, and starches listed below, the more “hotty.”

Veggies: White and Green (lettuce, spinach, asparagus, green string beans, celery, mushrooms, onions, water chestnuts, cauliflower, broccoli, and brussel sprouts) are excellent.

Fruits: Fruit that you eat along with skin or fresh are the most “hotty”: ex. Oranges, berries, grapes, grapefruit, apples, and plums.

Starch: Grains that are very coarse and high in fiber are best, for example: Slow cooked oats, high fiber bran cereals, and stone ground whole-wheat unprocessed breads.

Protein: The lower in fat and less processed, the more “hotty.” For instance, tuna packed in water, egg whites, boneless skinless chicken, and turkey breasts, white fish like cod, haddock and tilapia are among the best.

Beverages: Green tea is the most “hotty” of all of the beverages followed by cold water. Green tea contains catechin polyphenols which are proven to be “hotty” as they burn fat calories to produce heat. Try to sip on green tea throughout the day to maximize calorie burning. Cold water is also “hotty”, as our body is encouraged to burn calories to create heat to warm the water back to up to normal body temperature.

DD: Is exercise important for weight loss? How so?

Dr. H: Yes! Exercise burns calories. This is why we feel warm and sweat when we work out. Fat is being burnt off: it’s being converted to fuel and heat is released with the reaction. This is why the body heats up and sweats. Furthermore, after a session of exercise, our body continues to burn calories as it works to repair the micro-muscle damage that occurs after an exercise session.

Exercise also decreases insulin resistance and therefore helps to lower insulin levels. When our insulin levels are low, our body is encouraged to burn fat rather than store fat.

DD: How important is it to restrict fat and carbs for successful weight loss?

Dr. H.: On *The Hershberg Diet*, you can eat fat, you can eat carbs, you can even eat fatty carbs and the weight will come off. This is because the diet is all about balance. It teaches readers how to structure their diet such that high water food – foods that are filling, low in calories, and optimal for blood sugar and insulin levels – make up the majority of the daily menu. As a result, it is okay to eat moderate amounts of less healthy foods. That’s what makes the diet sustainable - a lifestyle rather than a fad diet.

DD: How much weight can a person lose in month, following your plan?

Dr. H.: A weight loss of between 5-12 pounds is typically experienced in the first two weeks of the plan (Phase One) and between 5-10 pounds in the second two weeks (Phase Two). Weight loss then proceeds at a steady rate of approximately 1-3 lbs per week. *The Hershberg Diet* offers the best of both worlds, rapid weight loss and a sustainable healthy program.

To learn more about this program and start slimming today, pick up *The Hershberg Diet*, by Dr. Melissa Hershberg.