

The 30 Pound Club

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The hCG Diet

I get asked a lot about the hCG diet, so I thought it was time to write about it. I know that many people have used it successfully and others approach it with a lot of suspicion. What I'm going to do is present the scientific evidence. I'll give you my opinion at the end of the message, but for the most part, I'm sticking strictly to the research.

Human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) is a hormone produced by pregnant women; in fact it's what a urine test looks for to determine pregnancy. It's critical to the continued production of other hormones necessary to ensure that pregnancy continues. In the early 1950s, Dr. A.T.W. Simeons, a British physician working in Italy, decided to use hCG injections in obese subjects to help reduce body weight. When combined with a 500-calorie diet for 40 days, subjects were reported to lose weight at a higher rate than those following the diet alone. More important, they were also reported to lose more body fat—especially from the waist and hips. I read the research from back then, and it was as good an argument as you get in scientific journals.

Dr. Simeons published a paper in 1954 describing the hCG diet. Basically, it called for daily injections of hCG deep into the gluteal muscles; those are the ones you sit on. The diet was 500 calories per day, and it consisted of zero carbohydrates from all sources except a green salad and a specific amount of fruit. Period.

As is typical, researchers tried to duplicate his findings in the 1960s. None could. Those given the placebo injections lost the same amount of weight as those who received the hCG injections. In each case, Dr. Simeons responded to critique the methods used in the study; either the diet was incorrect or the injections were not done at proper intervals. Dr. Simeons maintained that if done according to his plan, subjects given hCG would lose more weight and lose it from their abdominal regions.

In 1976 and again in 1977, researchers published the results of two studies conducted exactly the way Dr. Simeons conducted his program. The diet, the injections—everything was identical. The results? There were no differences in how much weight the subjects lost and where they lost it. Dr. Simeons died in 1970, so there was no response that time.

There are a couple of important points from Dr. Simeons himself. First, only injections of hCG in the gluteal muscle were found to be effective. That eliminates the drops and tablets that are sold with the hCG Diet today. Second, his diet must be followed precisely or it won't work. The only way it really worked was in metabolic wards where the diet could be precisely controlled. Free-living individuals—those of us living outside laboratories—tend to cheat on what we eat and according to Dr. Simeons, any variation dooms us to failure.

My Thoughts

Based on the research, there is little scientific support for the diet. No other researchers were ever able to get it to work, even when following his programs precisely. Scientific research to support the program is really critical because this is not an inexpensive way to lose weight—plus you have to get injections in your behind every day. I'm also cautious about playing around with hormones. Finally, you also have to be under a physician's care because to eat that few calories for 40 days—the maximum number of days on the weight-loss cycle—you must have your vitals monitored. This is especially true if you're a diabetic or have hypertension.

Given what the science shows, plus the fact that the emphasis is not on changing lifestyle but on a temporary fix, I would avoid using the hCG diet. I know that many people have used it, and they are pretty vocal telling me how

well it worked for them and others. That's fine. What we don't know is why it doesn't work for so many other people who have tried it, lost weight, and then just like everyone else, gained it back. If you have the resources and you want to give it a go, try it; any time you cut back calories so drastically, you're bound to lose a significant amount of weight. But if you intend to maintain whatever weight you lose, you have to change your lifestyle. If you don't, it won't be One and Done—it will be One and then Another One because you have to do it again after you gain the weight back by living the way you did to gain the weight in the first place.

30 Pound Club Group on Facebook

It's great to see people helping and encouraging each other via the 30 Pound Club Group on Facebook, and now we have over 500 members. If you're logged in to Facebook when you click the link, you'll go right to the Group's wall if you're a member and to the Group info page if you're not—and while you're there, you can request membership. If you're not already on Facebook, it's free and easy to join, and then you can participate in the Group discussion on the wall. And I'd still like to hear from more men; very few men have posted anything. Are any of you guys having any success? Got any questions? Let's hear about it.

One and Done.

What are you prepared to do today?™

Dr. Chet

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